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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE HONORABLE IRENE PARLBY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE DEGREE OF
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FACULTY OF ARTS

BY
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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned hereby certify that they
have read and recommend to the School of Graduate
Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled

"The Honorable Irene Parlby",
submitted by Clare Mary McKinlay, B.A., in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts.

Professor

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Date. *April 20th 1953*

Professor

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Finally, the writer wishes to express her gratitude to Mrs. Irene Parlby, whose kindness and infinite patience made possible the completion of this work.

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FOREWORD

Whether the subject is worth all the patience, diligent research, and perseverance which Clare McKinlay has put into the writing of this thesis, is for others to say.

It does perhaps show that like Ulysses and most other humans, "I am a part of all that I have met", and that while I have not accomplished all that I would have wished during my eighty-five years, it has been given me to pass through that "Arch of Experience" so that as I near the last horizon I can say again with Ulysses: "Much have I seen and known; cities of men, and manners, climates, counsels and governments."

All of these many experiences have added much to the enrichment of my life, the greater part of which has been spent on a Western farm in my adopted country of Canada, a country which has given me much happiness and many friendships.

(sgd.) Irene Parlby

INTRODUCTION

For over half a century, Mrs. Irene Parlby has lived in Western Canada, and during that time she has made notable contributions to the life of the province of Alberta. She was one of the founders of the United Farm Women of Alberta, a member of the legislature, a Minister of the Crown, and a delegate to the League of Nations. Not only was she in the forefront of the movement that brought about improved health and welfare services and a higher status for women, but she was a homemaker, a writer, and a well-known public speaker. As the years went by, Mrs. Parlby became one of Canada's best-known and most distinguished women.

This thesis is an attempt to give some account of her life and achievements. In her own words: "Sometimes . . . it is well to turn our eyes backward over the road travelled, remind ourselves of the dangers and difficulties conquered, and pay generous tribute to those who guided our footsteps and set them on the right way."¹

1. Parlby, Hon. Irene; "A Backward Glance", in THE U.F.A., Dec. 1, 1927.

CHAPTER ONE

Early Years in India and England 1868-1896¹

Mary Irene Marryat was born at 75, Eccleston Square, London, on January 9, 1868. Her parents were Colonel Ernest Lindsay Marryat, R.E., of the East India Company, and Elizabeth Lynch Marryat, formerly of County Mayo, Ireland. She was a great-granddaughter of Joseph Marryat, Member of Parliament for Horsham Surrey, and a great-niece of the well-known writer Captain F. Marryat, R.N. Her father was engaged in civil engineering in India where most of his work consisted of the construction of railroads. Her mother, who had come to England for the birth of her daughter, returned to the East in the spring.

For six of the next sixteen years the family lived in India, from 1868 to 1871 and from 1881 to 1884. Then Colonel Marryat retired from his work in India and returned to England where he became an official in the London office of the Bengal North-²Western Railway and the Delta Light Railway.

Of India, the Marryats had happy and vivid memories. They lived for most of the time at a

military station at Rawalpindi in the Punjab. At the beginning of the hot season they moved to the mountain resort of Murree in the Himalayas. The children always had a "nanny" and a governess, and numerous playmates from other British families in the colony. Irene³ who owned her own pony became a rather expert horsewoman. She recalls that one time when her father was the manager of a railroad from Lahore to Peshawar she went with him on an inspection trip which took them close to the famed Khyber Pass. She was sixteen when Colonel Marryat retired, and she left India with many regrets.

In England, the Marryats lived in the country. They had a large house in Lympsfield, Surrey, from which the father commuted to London. The family increased steadily to include eight children, of whom Irene was the eldest. The five girls were educated at home by governesses; they studied literature, history, French, arithmetic, drawing, and music. The boys went to private schools as soon as they were old enough. When Irene was almost seventeen she spent six months with some English friends from India who were living in Freiberg, not far from the Black Forest

in Germany. There she studied music and German, but she remembers that she was much more interested in enjoying herself than in doing lessons. Her formal education ended that year. Recently she wrote: "Now seeing all the opportunities modern girls have for education and careers, how I wish I had been born⁴ thirty or forty years later -- and in Canada."

Life in Surrey was rather charming. The Marryats were not rich, but even with a large family and home, they lived very comfortably. Friends were nearby, and relatives were not too far away in other parts of England, and in Ireland. In common with the times, social entertainment was almost entirely at home, where activities included teas, dances and the staging of private (and original) theatricals. Then there were sports such as tennis, cricket, skating, and field hockey which Irene enjoyed greatly. Occasionally there was a trip to London, and once or twice the family went abroad. As Irene grew older, she began to think that her way of life was rather aimless. "It was just filling⁵ in time." She felt the need of doing something more useful, and perhaps she had too much spirit and

curiosity to remain satisfied in Victorian England's polite upper middle-class society. Once her father asked her if she was interested in studying medicine. She was not; she wished to study acting or writing. But the stage was not considered quite respectable and her desire to write was not encouraged.

When she was asked recently if she could recall some of the early influences of her life, Mrs. Parlbby mentioned her father. Colonel Marryat was ahead of his time in some ways: for example he approved of women going to college and entering some of the professions. He was a Unionist,⁶ and he may have passed on to his eldest child some of his interest in public affairs. Other influences may have been the countryside which she loved, and reading, for which she acquired early a deep and lasting taste. Perhaps the memories of India which occupied a special place in her mind and heart, and which were in marked contrast to the tranquil Britain that she knew, had aroused within her an interest and a desire for a new way of life in a completely different environment.

In 1894, after some months of indifferent health, Irene Marryat went to St. Moritz in Switzerland. There she spent the winter resting, enjoying the climate, and liking immensely the friendly people and the quaint Swiss chalets. She returned home feeling much better physically but with as much inner dissatisfaction as before. Then in 1896 a friend came to Surrey on a visit from Canada. This friend was Mrs. Charles Westhead who, with her husband, had left England about two years before to ranch in the Buffalo Lake district⁷ of the then North West Territories. She had invited one or two people to visit her. Did Irene wish to go too? Colonel Marryat received the suggestion with some enthusiasm and it was arranged that she should go to Canada for a year.

She left England in May, 1896.

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1. Nearly all the information in Chapter One came from interviews with Mrs. Irene Parlby who is the only member of Colonel and Mrs. Marryat's family in the Alix district, and with Mrs. Parlby's son, Humphrey Parlby, who recalled what he had heard from his grandparents and others.
 2. The Delta Light Railway was an Egyptian company.
 3. Irene is pronounced I-reen-ee.

4. Parlby, Mrs. Irene: Unpublished letter, Aug. 1, 1952.
5. Interview with Mrs. Irene Parlby, Aug. 12, 1952.
6. The Unionists were the Liberal opponents of Irish Home Rule who formed themselves into a party against Gladstone. Eventually they joined the Conservatives.
7. Appendix D1, p. 119.
Buffalo Lake is approximately eighty miles south-east of Edmonton and almost mid-way between the Red Deer and Battle Rivers. Its name was given to a large district which surrounded it.

CHAPTER TWO

Early Years in Canada 1896-1914¹

The journey to Canada took thirteen days. For most of the time the seas were rough and the trip was far from pleasant. The calm waters of the St. Lawrence River were a welcome relief, and Quebec City was a fine introduction to Canada. In the old capital, Irene Marryat and Mrs. Westhead enjoyed two days of interesting sight-seeing. Then came the long transcontinental trip to Calgary. There the Westhead party had to spend a few days at the Alberta Hotel while awaiting the twice-weekly train to Edmonton. Calgary was a small cow-town at that time but it was lively and picturesque, especially to someone from far-away Surrey. On the way north the visitors were guests of the Honorable Charles Mackintosh, the Lieutenant-Governor of the North West Territories. At the tiny settlement of Lacombe from where they had to travel about twenty-eight miles eastward to the Buffalo Lake Ranch, they were met by their host, Charles Westhead.

The party set off in a democrat. Behind them came a baggage-laden wagon driven by an unusual and colorful old-timer called Jim Gadsby. That was

a drive to remember! It was June and the country looked beautiful. "But the trail! -- we tumbled out of one deep mud hole into another. Jim would unhitch his team of mules, yoke them onto our democrat and pull us out. Then someone said that the creek ahead was flooded and the bridge was floating. I wondered nervously about that! We couldn't so much as see the bridge but the men seemed to know where the poles ought to be. We plunged in and the team got us across The Westhead ranch which we reached about 11:30 at night was a surprise; the two-storey log house was big and inviting, and the wood fire, blazing on the hearth of the living room made us forget somewhat the hazardous ride." ² Such was Irene Marryat's real introduction to pioneer life.

Soon the young Englishwoman was absorbed in the general activity of the ranch. She helped her hostess, and for the first time in her life learned to keep house and to cook. She had always liked using her hands, and now she had much occasion to do so. She went riding, and loved the rolling parkland in all its lush beauty. "I was never homesick", she often said later.

Neighbors were few and generally far between. Among them were the Parlby brothers who lived three miles away. Edward Parlby, but recently married, had come from England to Ontario in 1886, after which time he went to Calgary, then north to the Ponoka area where he took up ranching. In 1890 he was visited by his older brother Walter who had spent the three previous years tea-planting in Assam. Walter's visit became permanent. He said long afterwards that he disliked the country at first, was persuaded to remain another fortnight -- and then stayed the rest of his life. When the brothers heard that a railway was to be built from Calgary to Edmonton and would likely interfere with their ranching, they decided to look for land somewhere else. One week-end, after due preparation, they set off on horseback to the south-east toward the Buffalo Lake area some thirty miles away. About two days later they came upon extensive hay flats, not far from a lake and a fair-sized creek, and near good shelter. This was an ideal location for stock-raising. They homesteaded there and were the first white settlers east of Lacombe.

The Parlbys were sons of Reverend John Hall Parlby, J.P., of Manadon, Crownhill, Devon, not far from Plymouth. Their people were of the landed

gentry of England.³ Walter had attended Oxford where he received a Master of Arts degree and was known as an outstanding athlete. He had hoped to study theology but he changed his mind when his father disapproved strongly of the High Church tendencies of the college he wished to attend. After a few years in Assam he had come to Western Canada. He was a good friend and a frequent guest at the Westhead ranch.

In 1896 when Walter Parlby met Irene Marryat, he was thirty-four years of age. In appearance he was hazel-eyed, dark-haired, tall, and very lean. His friends knew him to be quiet-spoken and witty. Miss Marryat discovered soon that he liked ranching, horses, shooting and riding, and that he was a scholarly man who read his Greek Testament every day and the classics when he could. She too loved books and riding and the out-of-doors. Almost from the first the two were attracted to each other, and by early autumn they were⁴ engaged to be married.

A good deal of planning and work was done in the next few months. A kitchen was added to Walter Parlby's ranch cabin. Irene sent home for a trousseau and some linens, and kept herself busy with what she called her "domestic education". In

due course Colonel and Mrs. Marryat made the proper announcements from Lympsfield, Surrey. The ceremony was planned for the following March at the Lamerton Mission Church of Saint Monica's which the Parllys had helped to build in the summer of 1895⁵.

The engaged couple had a long, cold ride to Lacombe where they met Bishop Pinkham, a personal friend of the Westheads, who had come from Calgary to officiate at the ceremony. The return trip was one of the coldest that Irene was to experience for a long time. Then a heavy snowfall came which prevented the wedding party from reaching the church eight miles away. The marriage took place at the Westhead home on March 15, 1897.

Among the wedding gifts were a silver tea set from the groom's parents in Devonshire, china from the Edward Parllys nearby, a sewing machine, an attractive picnic basket, and books. (One friend sent a complete and beautifully-bound set of Thackeray). Most of the presents were cheques, some of which were used by the newly-married couple to buy a piano for the cabin which was their first home.

Walter Parlby's ranch was called "Dartmoor" after ~~the~~ well-known moor in England close to which his father's home had been built. It was less than a mile from Edward's Long Valley Ranch. The land owned by the brothers surrounded Parlby Lake, ^{se-}named by government surveyors in 1893⁶, and which, from that time ~~on~~ has been a sort of private bird sanctuary. The cabin was located higher than the other buildings on a gentle rise along the north shore with protecting trees behind. It had two fair-sized rooms at the front with a small kitchen at the back. The partitioned but unfinished attic served as guest rooms when the occasion demanded. The main items of furniture were a stove, a bed, an armchair, a large bookcase, and home-made things such as a kitchen table and chairs, a bench or two and a cupboard. These were supplemented by the wedding presents mentioned earlier. At once the bride set to work to make the best of the materials available. She found the sewing machine very useful because she had learned at home how to sew. Gradually, by work of loving hands, the rude prairie house was changed into a cozy dwelling. Chintz and a beautiful set of Fores prints made for color and gaiety. Later on, articles such as china, books, and more pictures were brought or sent out from England, and Timothy Eaton's in Winnipeg was a good source of supply.

Mrs. Parlby had begun at last to live in earnest. She recalls that very little in the West was what she had anticipated, but that did not disturb her unduly. She was now a wife and a fellow-worker in the building of a Canadian farm home, and the urge within her to experiment and to acquire new knowledge became more intense and enthusiastic. With native thoroughness and ingenuity, she continued the education begun at Mrs. Westhead's. She baked and sewed, and she learned from her husband how to cultivate a vegetable garden. She raised some chickens and succeeded in making butter. She wanted flowers, so she coaxed the men to build a picket fence near the small house to keep out farmyard intruders. Then she raked and cleaned the slope to the lake, put in a bit of hedge and planted a few maples. The next year her flower garden was started. "Pleasant places make pleasant people," she said years later. "If you want to accomplish sweetness, serenity, graciousness, these things must find their source in your home life and surroundings, and no home is really sweet or gracious or pleasant which has not some kind of a flower garden around it."⁷

Cooking presented a problem. Most of the supplies came twice-yearly from the Hudson's Bay

Company's store in Calgary. These included dried fruit, tea, coffee, sauces, and some tinned goods such as salmon. Flour, as well as sugar and oatmeal were bought in Lacombe. When the wild fruits were in season, the Indians would come round with pails of raspberries or gooseberries to sell or trade for something they wanted. The vegetables, eggs, milk, and butter from the farm were of much help, while game and fish were usually plentiful. Unpleasant memories are those of beef pickled in brine, and dry, salt bacon.

The men did practically all the outside work. Walter was helped by a hired man as well as by one or two boys who had come from England to learn about ranching. The settlers at that time were engaged chiefly in raising cattle and breeding horses. In spring and summer they were busy sowing oats for green-feed, rounding up the stock on the open range, repairing and putting up buildings, and making hay. Sometimes the Indians, whom most of the white people liked, did some brushing and cutting. The winters were less strenuous except in severe weather when feeding and watering the stock took up most of one's energy.

Almost without exception the neighbors were kind and helpful. The nearest ones were the Edward

Parlbys who lived to the west along the lakeshore. Further away were the Westheads, the Trevennens, and the Hills. A Scottish couple named Hutchison ran a post office and small store at Lamerton (now Mirror) which was eight miles north-east. Others included a Mr. Roberts whose ranch along the Red Deer River was near that of ^{the Hon.} Oliver Howard, a son of Lord Carlisle. All these people were of similar background and outlook who tried as much as possible to retain a number of Old Country ways. This not only made life pleasanter but it deepened that sense of comradeship which flourishes where people are few and dependent upon each other. Jim Gadsby of whom mention was made earlier, lived with his Indian wife on a small place nearby. The Westheads' hired man was "Tip" Willet who left in '98 for the gold rush, and was one of the few adventurers who reached the Yukon by way of the Peace River Country. Much further to the south were other settlers whom the Parlbys knew. In those days when the country had so many wide-open spaces, people who lived fifty miles away were often looked upon as neighbors.

In spite of work and the lack of conveniences, there was time for leisure and all-round enjoyment. Friends visited, enjoyed private dances, went riding,

boating, and picnicking. Most of the men belonged to the Haunted Lakes Polo Club⁸ which Walter Parlby had organized. In the winter, field hockey was a favorite sport; it was played on Parlby Lake by mixed teams of men and women who used willow branches for sticks. During the long evenings people often wrote to relatives and friends "back home", or they read or just talked. Generally speaking, the circle of friends was small, and remained rather exclusive even when the population of the settlement increased after 1900.

Occasionally the Parlbys went to visit friends named Hickling who lived at the Beaver Dam near the location of present-day Carstairs. On one occasion when they were driving there they had to camp overnight. No sooner were they settled for sleep when they were shocked by the discovery that the tent had been pitched over a gopher colony. There was no rest for some time after that. Now and again they went to Calgary where they visited and shopped. Frequent travel was out of the question for the railway was thirty miles to the west and roads in any direction were merely trails.

Naturally there were many discouragements and not a few harrowing experiences. Stock diseases, early frosts, hail, and fire were ever-present threats.

Dollars were scarce and there was much "doing without" because there were no telephones, hospitals, or doctors. The lack of medical aid was a special cause for anxiety particularly for families with children. Many are the tales of rude remedies that were conjured up in moments of need. Mrs. Parlby told of an encounter which her husband and brother-in-law had with a very sick man whom they found in an isolated cabin. The settler was hemorrhaging and was in great pain. Walter had read somewhere that vinegar was good in just such an emergency, so he seized a bottle which happened to be amongst his stores and poured some of the contents down the man's throat. The bleeding stopped, and after a few days the man was back on his feet. At times of course, nothing availed but that occurred in surprisingly few cases. Neighbor helped neighbor and never was aid for the sick or injured refused.

Naturally most of the pioneers remember the best of those times. The kindness of memory has blurred the heartaches and the worries. It was a "young people's" country which made for optimism and buoyancy. Many of the settlers had come from comfortable homes, and in the valor of ignorance had plunged into a life of loneliness, discomfort, and hardship. Yet most of them enjoyed it and seldom regretted the move

they had made. They had an entirely different viewpoint from that of a brakeman on the Calgary and Edmonton Railway (C. and E.) who stood by listening to a group of men on the train discussing the beauties and opportunities of the West. At last, unable to hide his feelings any longer, he burst out with, "Well, damn any man I say who wants to live in a country where dried apples are a luxury!"⁹

As was to be expected, a few of the newcomers were misfits in a strange land. Others left in discouragement while some trailed off in search of further adventure. Mrs. Parlby tells of a young Englishman who had agreed to look after Dartmoor while the owners were in the Old Country one winter. The Boer War broke out however, and one fine day the hired man, a rather crusty old Dane, came in for his noonday meal to find this note on the table: "Gone to South Africa. Your dinner in the oven". It seemed that a friend had called in the morning, and together, the two had decided to enlist; with them went several of the young Britishers of the district in search of action somewhere else in the world.

There was no lack of individuality among the pioneers. Wherever they came from, they had strong

personalities, and sometimes a few of them were eccentric or just a little unusual. There was one old bachelor who had come to the district from the American West. He ran a horse ranch on the Red Deer River, and had very definite ideas on various subjects. For example, he refused to have a lamp in the house, and the only light he would allow was a bit of rag in a saucer of melted bacon or other fat. The only book he had on the premises was The American Horseman, from which he would read aloud to visitors or hired men. Any other book that turned up was promptly thrown into the stove to the accompaniment of colorful language.¹⁰

Years later in a radio broadcast, Irene Parlby summed up her own feelings about living in a new land. She said: "First of all I think came the exhilarating feeling of living where the world was really young, where there were no people crowding in on you with their miserable, silly little conventions and pettinesses and prejudices, and all the other barnacles people grow when they congregate together in a community. The freshness, the spaciousness, the extraordinary quietness of an unpeopled land; the absence of all complications, stresses, worries, and what-not of such a life. I feel so sorry for the later-comers who had not that experience."¹¹

In the fall of 1899, Mr. and Mrs. Parlby went to England. There in London on November 15, 1899, their son, Humphrey Marryat Hall Parlby, was born. They returned to Canada in the springtime accompanied by Gladys Marryat, a sister. The following year Colonel Marryat, who had wished for a long time to see Canada, came for a visit. In fact he had almost come to Manitoba in 1884 but his railway appointments had changed his mind. Like that of his eldest child, his enthusiasm for the West was almost unbounded. He went home, settled his affairs, and in 1904 returned to Canada with his wife and the majority of his family. He bought land near Haunted Lakes¹² where he built a picturesque home similar to a Breton farmhouse he had once seen and liked. The Marryats were a welcome addition to the settlement, not only because they intended to remain permanently but for the social and cultural influences they exerted in the district. For example, they became the nucleus of a drama group who for years aided community projects by staging plays that ranged from Shakespeare to Japanese comedy. The youngest of the family was a girl named Sheila, who was the first woman to graduate in agriculture from the University of Alberta and who became widely known in the province as the secretary of Radio Station C.K.U.A., Edmonton.

Gradually the Buffalo Lake settlement expanded. The tides of immigration began to touch the farthest prairies. Some of the newcomers travelled east from Lacombe along the trail that passed directly in front of the cabin at "Dartmoor," where they often stopped for help or advice of some sort.¹³ For the most part they were Americans, Scandinavians, Eastern Canadians, and some Britishers. Little shacks began to dot the horizons, and the old unwritten law against squatting within a certain distance of an already-established settler became obsolete. More immigrants came when the Canadian Pacific Railway built a branch line east of Lacombe. Walter Parlby's diary relates that the first train came through on September 2, 1905. The new station was named Alix in fulfilment of a promise made by Sir William Van Horne to Mrs. Westhead: he would give her name to a station if ever the C.P.R. built through that part of the world.¹⁴

With the increase of population, ranching began to decline. Cattle roaming had to be restricted as the range was taken up by homesteaders. Some of the pioneers left because they hated the loss of the old peace and freedom. They disliked too the worries, discordances, and variety of standards that came with the large influx of settlers. A few remained and ad-

justed themselves to changing conditions, and very often they helped in some way to direct the course of subsequent development and progress.

One might ask at this point: why were the pioneers important? Of what significance were the Parllys and other early-comers? Surely the answer is, that they helped to open up the country for settlement, and they set a standard that influenced the community in which they lived. As mentioned earlier Walter Parlyb aided in planning and building St. Monica's Church, one of the earliest Anglican churches between Edmonton and Calgary. In 1910 he helped toward the establishment at Alix of St. Pancras' Church where his family continues as active members.¹⁵ At about the same time he was a strong supporter of the United Farmers of Alberta on whose Provincial Board he served for a time. Later on he acted as Justice of the Peace and game warden at Alix, and was an original member of the Alberta Wheat Pool¹⁶ and the Central Alberta Dairy Pool. Mrs. Parlyb assisted in the formation in 1913 of a women's club in the district.¹⁷ As secretary of the club, she was instrumental in starting the first library in the settlement. She wrote a letter to The Spectator, requesting

donations of books from interested readers. The response was splendid; a few books came from such unexpected places as Japan and South Africa! That first little library was burnt when a fire destroyed the U.F.A. hall, but the women started over again, helped this time by small grants of money from the village council and the provincial government. From that small beginning a community library, complete with a children's section, has developed, and is a source of pride to the F.^W.U.A. which owns and runs it.

In the early fall of 1905, the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan were carved out of the North West Territories. For the inauguration ceremonies the Parllys went to Edmonton, partly because the Haunted Lakes Polo Team had been invited to take part in a tournament which had been planned especially for the occasion. This was Mrs. Parlby's first visit to Edmonton. She recalls that Lord Grey and Sir Wilfred Laurier delivered speeches, that she and her husband stayed at the Cecil Hotel, and that the ball at the Thistle Rink was a gala affair. Little did she dream that someday she would help to administer the affairs of the young province, and become known far beyond its boundaries.

At "Dartmoor" the busy years hurried by. The

cabin was enlarged and remodelled. The Parlbys went to England in 1904 and 1910 and brought home many things: brassware which had come from Assam, athletic trophies, china, pictures, and more books. Some furniture came from Edmonton. The household for a few years included a governess who taught the young son but the latter, at the age of nine, went to Western Canada College in Calgary. Photographs that were taken in those pioneer days show that Mrs. Parlby had changed little. She was straight and slender; her medium-brown hair was piled high on her head and her hazel eyes looked candidly at the world.

As yet she had made no debut in public life. That was to come shortly through an organization known as "The United Farm Women of Alberta".

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1. The information concerning pioneer times in the Buffalo Lake District was obtained from Mrs. Irene Parlby and her son, and from her nephew, Mr. Jack Parlby.
 2. Parlby, Mrs. Irene: Unpublished letter, April 10, 1952.
 3. Burke's Landed Gentry, 1937 edition, p. 1754.
 4. The writer did not feel free to enquire too closely into personal details because of Walter Parlby's recent death.
 5. Lamerton was the old name for Mirror (See Appendix D2) and was in the Buffalo Lake District. Austin, the Rev. F.C.: Unpublished letter, March 17, 1953. Mr. Austin, who is the present rector wrote: "The Parish of St. Monica was actually formed on January 29, 1895"

On the 29th of July, the building was opened by Archdeacon Cooper of Calgary, assisted by the Reverend H. Goodman

"About the time the church was built the Dominion Government was making grants of land to new mission churches . . . Walter Parlby made application for the grant on May 29, 1897, and the grant was conceded in July. It comprised 40 acres, surrounding the present church property. As a direct result of the land boom that flourished just prior to World War I, land values around Lamerton . . . suddenly shot up, so most of the 40 acres was subdivided, and 115 lots sold to one Charles H. Wisenden over the period 1911-1913. This gave the church an endowment of \$11,500 which is now administered by the Diocese for the benefit . . . of the churches comprising the present Lamerton Mission."

6. Kenway, C.B.: Unpublished letter, March 20, 1953. See Appendix D1, p. 119.
7. Quoted from "The Countrywoman" in The Grain Growers' Guide, May 15, 1918.
8. See Appendix D2. Haunted Lakes is approximately five miles southeast of Dartmoor.
- 9-10. These stories were told to Mrs. Parlby by her husband.
11. Parlby, Mrs. Irene: "I Shall Never Forget", a radio broadcast given over Radio Station C.J.C.A., Edmonton, February, 1938.
12. There is an old Indian legend connected with the name of the lake. According to the story, the spirits of some natives who were drowned in a certain spot appear at the same time each year.
13. See Appendix D1, p. 119.
14. Parlby, Mrs. Irene: Unpublished letter, April 10, 1952.
15. Austin, The Rev. F.C.: Unpublished letter, March 30, 1953.
16. The Alix Free Press, January 24, 1952.
17. Chapter Three, pp. 32, 33.

CHAPTER THREE

The United Farm Women of Alberta

About the time that the Province of Alberta was created in 1905, movements toward organization began among some of the settlers. These were good omens, for "not only was Alberta relatively backward as a wheat-producing province, but it also lacked as representative and as coherent a provincial farmer's organization as that of the Manitoba or Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Associations."¹ The Canadian Society of Equity² was formed in 1905 by settlers who had recently migrated to the Edmonton district from Dakota and Nebraska, where they had been members of the American Society of Equity.³ This was followed in the same year by the Alberta Farmers' Association, some of whose members had belonged to the old Territorial Grain Growers' Association in the district of Alberta.⁴ From 1905 to 1908, both organizations worked to extend their membership and influence throughout the province. Efforts toward unity began as early as 1906, and in January, 1909, the two groups amalgamated to form "The United Farmers of Alberta; Our Motto, Equity."⁵ The Grain Growers'

Guide⁶₇ was adopted as the official organ of the new body. Almost at once, the U.F.A., as the organization became known,^{as} increased its membership and influence. It was interested chiefly in economics and politics where the interests of the farmers were most involved and it exerted what pressure it could on the provincial and federal governments. "From the outset . . . the provincial government was always ready to listen to its executive, and at least one provincial cabinet minister usually attended the annual convention to explain and defend the government's policy. Federal authorities were equally ready to recognize its role as the official organ of rural demands. When Laurier made his famous tour of the West in 1910 he held an interview with James Bower, president of the U.F.A. and the acknowledged⁸ spokesman for the organized farmers of Alberta."

In common with other grain growers' organizations, the U.F.A. attempted to impress upon the Dominion Government the need for tariff reduction, passage of the Canada Grain Act, and financial aid for livestock marketing. In the province it was interested in the introduction of direct legislation that included the initiative and the referendum; it

wanted hail insurance, more rural credit aid, and a co-operative elevator company. In 1912 it passed at its convention a resolution in support of women's suffrage.⁹ It continued a program of education or indoctrination by which it endeavored to convince rural people that organization was the key to an improved economic status for farmers.¹⁰

It should be mentioned at this point that the United Farmers of Alberta, in common with all Western Canadian farm organizations, had a dual background. In it was a general intermingling of the ideas of American agrarianism with those of British liberalism and co-operation. The assessment of the influence of the one as against that of the other remains an interesting and provocative field of discussion. For example, one might ask: whence came the idea of women's participation in Canada's western farm associations, and especially in Alberta? Was it from America or from Britain? The writer does not know but a few facts are worth recording.

In 1873, according to the constitution of the Patrons of Husbandry (or the Grange),¹¹ provision was made for the inclusion in the organization, with full

membership rights, of the wives and unmarried daughters
of farmers.¹² Likewise, when the Order came to Canada
and a Dominion Grange was formed, the declaration of its
principles stated that sex distinctions were to be
wholly eliminated and that one of the aims was "to
inculcate a proper appreciation of the abilities and
sphere of women".¹³ Though the Grange was declining
fast by 1900, it may have had a widespread influence¹⁴
because it had had branches in many parts of Canada.
The Patrons of Industry¹⁵ and the Farmers' Association¹⁷
of Ontario¹⁶ as well as the United Farmers of Ontario¹⁷
left women out of their memberships until 1918. Not
so on the prairies. By 1912 the "Grain Growers' Guide"
began to tell farm women to organize for the betterment
of themselves and the farming industry.¹⁸ Two years
later the Saskatchewan Women's Grain Growers' Associa-
tion was formed, the first farm women's organization
of its kind in Canada.¹⁹ In 1913 the United Farmers
of Alberta amended its constitution so that women²⁰
could enrol on equal terms with men. Consequently,
a sprinkling of women attended the next annual conven-
tion, and in 1915, when a larger group put in an ap-
pearance, the fifty-eight women delegates present
formed The Women's Auxiliary to the United Farmers of
Alberta.²¹ The first slate of officers consisted of

the following: president, Miss Jean Reed of Alix;
 vice-president, Mrs. C. Rice-Jones of Veteran;
 secretary-treasurer, Mrs. R. W. Barritt of Mirror;
 directors, Mrs. H. C. McDaniel of Whitla, Mrs. J. A.
 Davis, Sr. of Acme, and Mrs. O. S. Young of Lacombe.²²
 The Alix club became Local Number One, which it remains²³
 to this day.

Mrs. Parlby indicated that, in her opinion, some of the credit for the sympathetic attitude toward women should go to the prairie people themselves. Many of the men must have had a real appreciation for their womenfolk who had come with them into the wilderness, and endured more than their share of privations. The women, in turn, deserved this appreciation because of their endurance and courage. She once wrote: "Perhaps the greatest and most illuminating thing which I found (in the West) was that women were²⁴ useful and important." Here, in a new environment she had found for the first time, a feeling of partnership and equality.

From 1909 on, Mrs. Parlby heard much about the United Farmers of Alberta; her husband and father were enthusiastic from the beginning. She recalls that

Colonel Marryat had strong convictions about the advantage of co-operative effort. "I always remember that soon after he came out here, he remarked that he could not understand why the farmers did not get together and co-operate. I think that it was chiefly owing to him that the first U.F.A. local in our district was formed." ²⁵ She could have added that her husband, who always took an interest in local affairs, ²⁶ was the first president of the Alix group. A few years later some of the women in the community began to think of an organization for themselves. The story of their first club is as follows.

Women had become numerous in the Buffalo Lake District. Many of them remained partial strangers to each other because they had to work hard with little time for relaxation or opportunity for getting together. Farms were scattered; the village was small and except for a couple of stores had little to offer in the way of a meeting-place when families drove to town in wagon or buggy. "Therefore, when an Englishwoman who was visiting my sister Sheila at Haunted Lakes, suggested the formation of some kind of women's club, several of us thought it a fine idea -- and set to work at once." ²⁷ The Englishwoman was a Miss Mitchell who had come to

the Marryats' after having made a tour in Saskatchewan observing women's clubs. The first meeting, which was held in the parish room of the Anglican Church in Alix in the spring of 1914, was rather small. The next one was much larger. The women decided to meet once a month from then on, and named their gathering "The Alix Countrywomen's Club". The president was Mrs. R. W. Barritt of Mirror, the secretary, Mrs. Walter Parlby. The programs were not exciting but they were satisfying; they dealt with feminine things, and over the cups of tea warm and lasting friendships were made. The next year when the U.F.A. convention was held in Edmonton, "The Countrywomen's Club" sent two delegates who became president and secretary-treasurer of the Women's Auxiliary to the United Farmers of Alberta. (Mrs. Parlby was ill and unable to attend). The Alix club affiliated itself with the new organization and as stated earlier, became Local Number One.

In January 1916, Mrs. Parlby went as a delegate to the U. F. A. convention in Calgary. There to the Auxiliary she read a paper entitled "Women's Place in the Nation" in which she emphasized that woman's chief role is that of homemaker. Later than week, to her

surprise and somewhat to her consternation, she was elected provincial president. In this way, and all unwittingly, she made her entry into public life.

Mrs. Parlby set herself an immediate task. She had never liked "auxiliaries" so she attempted to change the status of the organization of which she was now the head. When successful, she was happy to see the association renamed "The United Farm Women of Alberta".²⁹ She points out that "the change did not occur as a natural sequence of events nor as a part of ordinary procedure, but required a great deal of persistence and patience on the part of the Auxiliary before the men realized the value of accepting the women's branch as an integral part of their organization with equal privileges",³⁰ including those of conducting its own affairs, setting up its own local unions, and of its executive members having a place on the U.F.A. Board. Mrs. Parlby remembers with appreciation the advice and encouragement given to the women by Henry Wise Wood who,³¹ that same year, had been elected as president of the "United Farmers".

In June of 1916, Mrs. Parlby and Mrs. Barritt, the secretary-treasurer, undertook their first organization tour. Previous to this, they and other members

of the executive had sent out letters through the U.F.A. locals urging women to organize. In addition they had sent notices and news items to the Grain Growers' Guide. They went where requested by people who were interested in forming locals. They travelled to Calgary, Nanton, Macleod, Craigmyle, Delia, and Stettler. Often they had difficulties, but nearly always they were rewarded by enthusiasm and kindness.³² It is regrettable that stories and records of some of the early incidents did not find their way into the original files,^{of the U.F.W.A.} or have been lost by the passing of a number of pioneer members. Later, other officers and many of the rank-and-file did further organization work. Generally speaking, however, the leaders were Mrs. Parlby, Mrs. Barritt, and Mrs. H. E. Spencer, who was vice-president in 1916 and a prominent U.F.W.A. worker.³³ Steadily the branches increased though there was no "mushroom growth". In 1918, the membership stood at about 1450, and in 1920, 4004.³⁴

From the outset, the association had broad foundations. Its aims were educational and social. It meant to increase and broaden the knowledge of farm women, to meet the pronounced need for social contact, and to co-operate with the U.F.A. on all matters affecting the welfare of rural people. In 1916, once

the status of the U.F.W.A. had been definitely established, the first committees were formed to deal with Health, Education, and Young People's Work. In the next two years, additional committees were set up on Legislation, Horticulture, Social Welfare, Home Economics, and Co-operative Effort.³⁵ In 1920, the provincial conveners of the various committees prepared bulletins which were sent every month to each local in order to "better acquaint members with important issues of the day, and to serve as a basis for intelligent discussion."³⁶

A year or so after its beginning, the U.F.W.A. played a prominent part in activities that resulted in the building of municipal hospitals, the appointing of public health nurses, improvements in child welfare, and revisions of the courses of study in education.³⁷ For example, the Municipal Hospitals Bill, assented to in April, 1919, was drafted by a group that met in the King Edward Hotel, Edmonton, and included Mr. Lamb, later Deputy Minister of Health, Mrs. Parlby, Mr. H. W. Wood, Mr. Rice Sheppard, and Mrs. Barritt.³⁸ Mrs. Parlby who was, for several years, the health convener of the U.F.W.A. (as well as president) was a diligent leader in the agitation that led to the introduction

of obstetrical nursing in outlying areas where no
 doctor was available to women during childbirth.³⁹

After every convention a delegation from the U.F.W.A. waited upon the provincial cabinet before whom they placed their requests and resolutions.

To the Department of Extension, University of Alberta, and especially to Mr. A. E. Ottewell, the director, and to Miss Jessie Montgomery, the librarian, the members of the U.F.W.A. owed much. Both were enthusiastic from the first ~~about~~ the new venture and sent out extensive program material.⁴⁰ Mr. Ottewell, in August, 1916, had organized at the university the first rural leadership conference, "for teachers, ministers and leaders of rural community organizations of all kinds",⁴¹ and when the U.F.W.A. began to discuss plans for the formation of junior groups, he was deeply interested. From its first years, the women's organization had encouraged junior activities; it had helped with school fairs and community clubs, and it was anxious to make things more interesting for farm young people.⁴² Finally in 1919, at the joint annual convention, the Junior United Farmers of Alberta was organized, which became a recognized part of the whole movement with its own officers and programs. The

first convener was Mrs. R. B. Gunn, an able and enthusiastic worker from Paradise Valley who worked hard in the establishment of branches throughout the province. An interesting phase of junior activities was the Farm Young People's Week held each summer at the University of Alberta, Edmonton. For this, Mrs. Parlby deserves most of the credit.⁴³ She was convinced that an annual conference at the university would have tremendous value. After receiving the approval of the U.F.A. Board, she interviewed university authorities, who were delighted to co-operate. The Farm Young People's Week, first held in June, 1919, has continued to the present, and has gained a very definite place for itself in almost every rural community in Alberta. For the university this is a fine thing. "Hundreds of young people who would have had no opportunity of ever getting to the university, are brought into contact with a new world. They . . . build up a spirit of good-will towards the university which could be built up in no other way."⁴⁴ For the boys and girls the conferences have educational value, and by establishing contact with the university, arouse the desire within some of them to return to study for a degree.

The United Farm Women of Alberta attained recognition nationally as well as provincially. Its

president, Mrs. Parlby, was called upon to engage in a rather wide field of public work which included: attendance at a Dominion conference of women held in Ottawa in February, 1918 at the Prime Minister's request in order to further war work; giving to the federal government at their request, advice on the question of women's immigration; membership on the Board of Governors of the University of Alberta; and official positions on the Canadian Council of Agriculture and in the Alberta Red Cross Society.

Mrs. Barritt served on the National Council of Education, and Mrs. Gunn, who later succeeded Mrs. Parlby on the Board of Governors, represented the Canadian Council of Agriculture at the Pan-American Congress of Women held in Washington, D.C. Other farm women served on various boards throughout the Province and Dominion.

Something needs to be said of the social side of the organization which may have been as important as anything else within the U.F.W.A. Out on the homesteads and farms there was monotony and isolation, with restricted opportunities for recreation and the development of social activities. Women needed to get together to talk over problems, to relax over cups of tea, to help in community activities, and to

feel they were part of something worthwhile. The U.F.W.A. met these needs. By its monthly meetings and other social and cultural get-togethers, it lessened in part some of the loneliness that was common to farm life. Moreover, by providing outlets for creative talents, it brought to the front a surprising number of fine and capable people. It must be emphasized that the rural associations in their local communities made deep and lasting impressions on the ordinary lives of their members.

The annual convention was the highlight of the year.⁴⁵ Apparently, each one was carefully planned. It was held for a week in January either in Edmonton or^m Calgary and in conjunction with that of the men. It might be interesting to note a few agenda. In 1918, in addition to official addresses, there were papers on rural schools, social service, and young people's work. In 1926 some of the reports were about the organization and work of the League of Nations, child welfare clinics, the Provincial Training School at Red Deer, the Mother's Allowance Act, and immi-⁴⁶gration. The convention of 1932 heard addresses that dealt with pre-school education, changes in the Old Age Pensions Act and the Child Welfare Act, the success of the Northern Dairy Pool, horticulture, and

Canadian art. Each year the executive arranged for prominent speakers, including a representative of the government, to address the delegates. Entertainment in the form of dinners, musicales, and the like provided pleasant diversion.

In a book which outlined the history to 1924 of the various farmers' movements in Canada, the author wrote in complimentary terms of the work of the women's organizations in the West. His words are especially applicable to the U.F.W.A.: "From the outset . . . their achievements have been noteworthy. In the wider field of endeavor their best work has probably been done in connection with questions of public health and rural education. When the women's organizations arose, facilities for procuring medical aid in many parts of the grain country were of the scantiest, a situation which has been vastly remedied through their efforts. . . . Again, with tangible results they have advocated the institution of child clinics, medical inspection in the elementary schools, and segregation of the mentally defective. On account of the alleged tendency of doctors to throng to the cities, the public health committee of the Alberta section have even suggested a nationalization of the

medical profession. . . . They have striven to secure more highly qualified teachers Moreover the women's section has been in the vanguard of the forces fighting for the temperance cause. They have . . . taken a strong stand in defence of the property rights of women Many of their locals have embraced the advantages of having travelling or permanent libraries; some have engaged in co-operative trading; others have been busy fostering community effort; while all have supplied their farm women members with programmes of an . . . inspirational value."⁴⁷

In 1920, Mrs. Parlby resigned as president. She said: "The organization has reached a stage when its own momentum will help to carry it along, the difficult days of arousing interest and establishing the position of the organization are over, and I feel I can . . . leave all active work in it to those who are more capable of carrying on than myself."⁴⁸ Perhaps better than anyone else, she knew that there was much talent among the membership at large; she had been thrilled over and over again by the eagerness and efficiency of many farm women with whom she had worked.⁴⁹ As for herself she would continue to belong to her own local and help there whenever she could.

She had contributed a great deal to the U.F.W.A. which, in turn, had done much for her. It had brought her out of a sheltered home life where she had been content with her family, books, and garden; it had brought to light some of her fine gifts, especially those of public speaking, writing, and a capacity for leadership and organization. Furthermore, it permitted her to know many people whom she might never have known in any other way. Most of all, perhaps, it made her feel that she had contributed in a meaningful way to the development of Western Canada which she loved.⁵⁰ Someone who knew her well pointed out that Mrs. Parlby became president when the farm women were timid and unsure of themselves, and her confidence and poise encouraged and inspired many.⁵¹ Her culture and charm were valuable assets in the new organization where she worked hard and imparted to others her enthusiasm and faith.⁵² After she was elected to the Legislature in 1921, she was chosen as a cabinet minister chiefly because she was one of the best-known women in Alberta.⁵³

After the political victory of the U.F.A. in 1921, the women's organization continued to expand. It had wise and capable leadership under Mrs. M. M. Sears, Mrs. R. B. Gunn, Mrs. Amy Warr, Mrs. R. Price,

Mrs. Winnifred Ross and others. In 1936, the United Farmers of Alberta left the political field, but remained keen and progressive in all its other activities. Finally, in 1949, it agreed to amalgamation with the Alberta Farmers' Union under the name of the Farmers' Union of Alberta (F.U.A.); the women's section is called the Farm Women's Union of Alberta (F.W.U.A.). The present total membership is approximately 21,000, of whom about 3,100 are women.⁵⁵ While there is less need for social activity, since a good deal of the rural isolation is gone, there remains much to be done in the fields of education and promotion of co-operatives.

Thus the work that began in 1915 continues to this day. The farm people can take pride in the history of their organizations, and many of the women remember Mrs. ^Parlby and other founders with deep appreciation.⁵⁶

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1. Patton, Harold S.: Grain Growers' Cooperation in Western Canada, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1928, p. 114.
 2. The original name in early 1905 was The American Society of Equity; this was changed toward the end of the year.

3. Patton, Harold S.: Grain Growers' Cooperation in Western Canada, p. 114.
4. Ibid., p. 114.
Wood, Louis Aubrey: A History of the Farmers' Movements in Canada, Toronto, Ryerson Press, 1924, p. 174 and p. 181. The Territorial Grain Growers' Association originated at Indian Head, in the district of Saskatchewan, in December, 1901. It spread westward into the district of Alberta and was an influence in the formation in March, 1903 of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association.
5. Ibid., p. 201.
6. The Grain Growers' Guide, published monthly in Winnipeg appeared in June, 1908. It was the official organ of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association, but it was financed and managed by the Grain Growers' Company. The latter, which had been organized in Winnipeg in July, 1906, was a grain-marketing co-operative owned and operated by western farmers. Ten years later it amalgamated with the Alberta Farmers' Co-operative Elevator Company to form the widely-known United Grain Growers, Ltd.
The Grain Growers' Guide, as the official organ of all Western farm organization, was perhaps the best-known publication among the rural people of the prairies. It became a weekly in August, 1909. Its name was changed to "The Country Guide" in 1928, and it is yet the official mouthpiece of the United Grain Growers, Ltd.
7. Grain Growers' Guide, June 26, 1918.
8. Rolph, William Kirby: Henry Wise Wood of Alberta, University of Toronto Press, 1950. p.32.
9. Ibid., p. 46.
10. Sharp, Paul F.: The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, p. 34.
11. Wood, Louis Aubrey: A History of the Farmers' Movement in Canada, pp. 21-28. The Patrons of Husbandry was formed in Washington, D.C., on December 4, 1867. In 1872 it began to sweep

through the United States where it extended into forty-one states, and penetrated into Quebec by way of Vermont. It seems to have been the most powerful of American agrarian movements, even though it was non-political.

12. Ibid., p. 28.
13. Ibid; pp. 40-49. The Dominion Grange was formed in London, Ontario, in June, 1874. It was the first strong Canadian farmers' organization.
14. Ibid; p. 69.
15. Ibid; pp. 109-112. The Patrons of Industry which was chiefly an agrarian organization with political and economic aims, was founded in Michigan in 1887 from where it entered Canada in 1890.
16. Ibid; pp. 148-149. The Farmers' Association of Ontario was founded in Toronto in September, 1902.
17. Ibid; pp. 273-276. The United Farmers of Ontario began in Toronto in March, 1914; it was a successor to associations which were in a state of decline.
18. Ibid; p. 296.
19. Ibid; p. 297.
20. Carter, Eva: Thirty Years of Progress, Calgary, U.F.A. Co-operative, 1944, p. 19.
21. Ibid; p. 20.
22. Ibid.
23. Interview with Mrs. Irene Parlby, April 12, 1952.
24. Parlby, Mrs. Irene: "The Milestones of My Life" Canadian Magazine, June, 1928.
25. Interview with Mrs. Irene Parlby, April 13, 1952.
26. Interview with Humphrey Parlby, April 15, 1952.
27. Interview with Mrs. Irene Parlby, April 14, 1952.
28. The full account is found in a pamphlet issued by the organization and called Reports and Addresses

of the United Farmers of Alberta, January, 1916.

29. "The United Farm Women of Alberta" soon became known as the "U.F.W.A."
30. Carter, Eva: Thirty Years of Progress, p. 23.
31. Interview with Mrs. Irene Parlby, November 10, 1952.
32. Information about organization work came chiefly from interviews with Mrs. R. B. Gunn and Mrs. Irene Parlby.
33. Interview with Mrs. R. B. Gunn, February 10, 1952. Mrs. Gunn, herself a prominent member of the U.F.W.A. emphasized the fact that the three women mentioned were the real founders of the organization.
34. These figures came from pamphlets entitled Reports and Addresses of the United Farm Women of Alberta, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920.
35. Information about the initial work of the U.F.W.A. was obtained by interviews with Mrs. R. B. Gunn and Mrs. Irene Parlby, and by use of the pamphlets mentioned in the previous reference.
36. Carter, Eva: Thirty Years of Progress, p. 29.
37. Interviews with Dr. M. R. Bow, August 4, 1952, and with Mr. R. G. Reid, July 16, 1952.
38. Carter, Eva: Thirty Years of Progress, p. 26.
39. Interview with Mrs. R. B. Gunn, February 10, 1952.
40. Ibid.
41. Cameron, Donald: History of the Farm Young People's Week at the University of Alberta, Department of Extension, University of Alberta, 1932, p. 2.
42. Interview with Mrs. R. B. Gunn, February 10, 1952.
43. Cameron, Donald: History of the Farm Young People's Week at the University of Alberta, p. 3.
44. Ibid: p. 7.

45. Information about conventions was taken from the pamphlets Reports and Addresses of the United Farm Women of Alberta, 1918 - 1934.
46. At this convention, Mrs. Parlby, then Minister Without Portfolio, spoke on the topic "Education for Peace".
47. Wood, Louis Aubrey: A History of the Farm Movement in Canada, pp. 298, 299.
48. Reports and Addresses of the United Farm Women of Alberta, 1920, p. 84.
49. Interview with Mrs. Irene Parlby, April 12, 1952.
50. Interview with Mrs. R. B. Gunn, February 10, 1952.
51. Spencer, Mrs. H. E.: Unpublished letter, August 5, 1952. Mrs. Spencer was a prominent U.F.W.A. worker for many years.
52. Ibid.
53. Interview with Mr. J. E. Brownlee, January 2, 1953.
54. Interview with Mrs. Irene Parlby, April 13, 1952.
55. The information regarding membership was obtained from the F.U.A. office in Edmonton.
56. Interview with Mr. Henry Young, September 15, 1952.

CHAPTER FOUR

Minister of the Crown

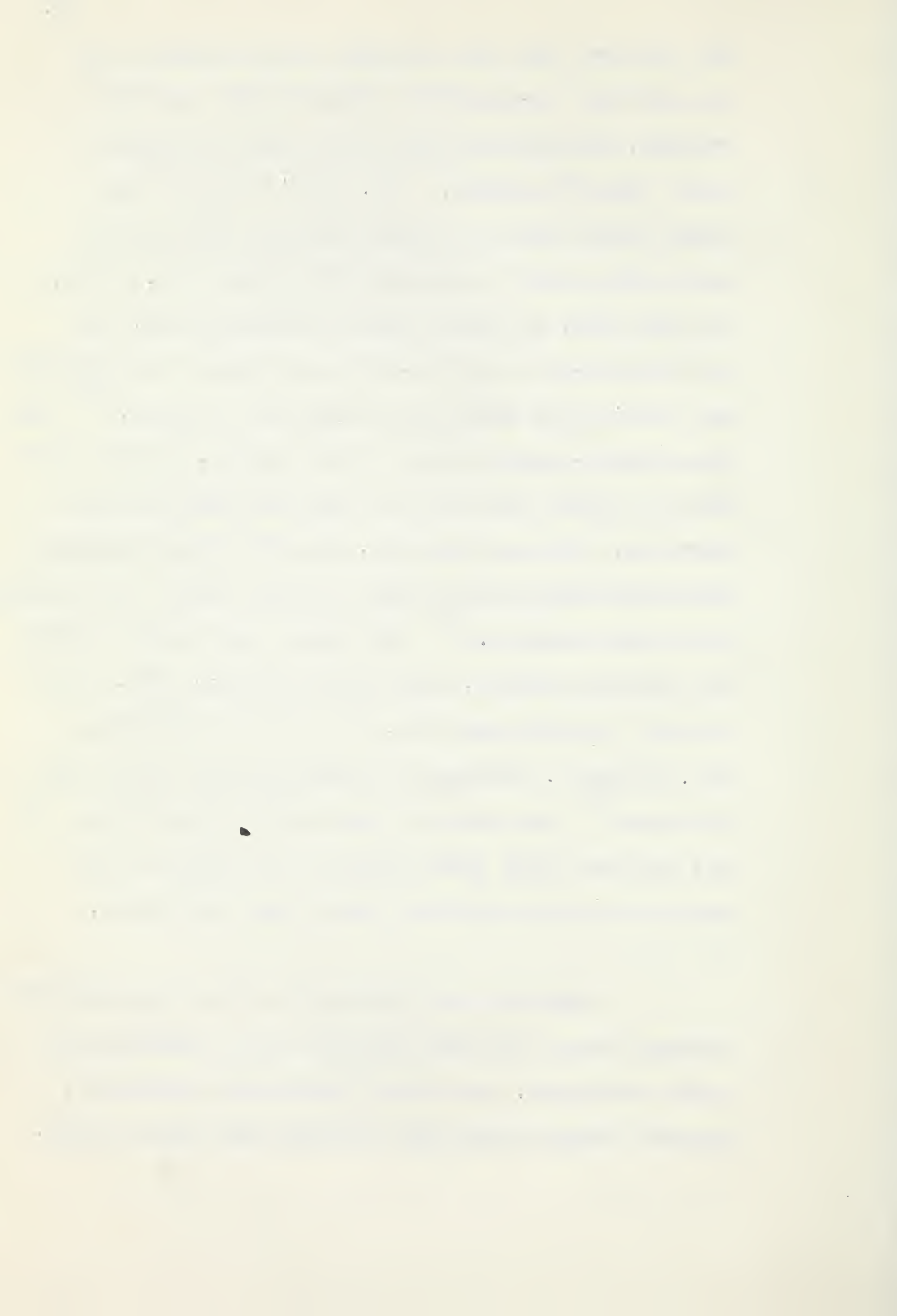
From its inception, the United Farmers of Alberta was interested in politics as well as in economics.¹ Its representatives often discussed rural problems with members of the provincial government, and co-operated with those of other farm organizations on the prairies in exerting pressure upon the Dominion cabinet for tariff and grain-marketing reforms.² The U.F.A. belonged to the "Canadian Council of Agriculture" which, since 1909, co-ordinated and publicized the activities of Canadian farmers from Ontario to the Rockies.³ In 1912 it saw clearly the value of organized political pressure when, chiefly as a result of agrarian demands, the Conservative Government in Ottawa passed the Canada Grain Act; the Act was a landmark in Canadian agriculture because it created a Board of Grain Commissioners to supervise and regulate the grain trade.⁴ In Alberta there was a "tacit alliance" between the organized farmers and the Liberal administration.⁵ For example, the provincial government in 1913 passed laws which set up the Alberta Co-operative Elevator Company, and permitted the initiative and referendum; in 1915 it enacted a Hail Insurance Bill

followed the next year by acts establishing female suffrage and liquor prohibition; from 1917 to 1919 it passed measures which dealt with the formation of rural credit societies to handle short-term loans, and brought into being a Health Department.⁶ All this legislation was connected directly with requests which the farmers had been making since 1909.

During World War I, agrarian discontent spread slowly across the prairies into Alberta. It had been present in Manitoba since 1900 when the farmers complained bitterly about the inadequacies of transportation facilities and grain marketing methods.⁷ It was aggravated by the defeat of reciprocity in 1911, Borden's continued hostility to rural demands for freer trade with the United States, and the increasing costs of farm agricultural production which were out of proportion to the rise in farm income. Gradually, the conviction grew among the western farmers that "federal political parties were run for the benefit of the privileged few", and that it was hopeless to look for⁸ reform from either the Conservatives or Liberals. The alternative, in the minds of many, was political action by the grain growers, an idea which was opposed by Henry Wise Wood, president of the U.F.A. since 1916,

who believed that the strength of the farmers lay in organized co-operation through which economic reforms, the primary aim of the wheat producers, might come the sooner.⁹ Mr. Wood's convictions found favour with the United Farmers which set to work with a will to increase its membership. Then, in July 1916, in Swift Current, Saskatchewan, the politically-inclined Non-Partisan League was organized and within five months had moved into Alberta.¹⁰ "The sharp class-consciousness of the League, and its advocacy of public ownership of essential agricultural services, such as elevators, and of the agricultural processing industries, such as flour mills, recommended it to many farmers."¹¹ The League made rapid headway in southern Alberta, and when in October 1917, a provincial election was held, two of its candidates, Mrs. Louise C. McKinney of Claresholm and James Weir of Nanton¹² won seats by substantial majorities. It was apparent that among some of the farmers, the desire for more political action was increasing.

After the end of the war, the wide disparity between prices of farm products and of manufactured goods continued. As rural indebtedness increased, western farmers grew more restless and discontented.



At the U.F.A. convention in Calgary in January, 1919, a resolution in favour of political action in the federal field was introduced and passed unanimously. It provided for the calling of conventions by the locals in each of the twelve federal constituencies in Alberta.¹³ The resolution was backed strongly by the United Farm Women of Alberta which was convinced of the need for more political activity. The Grain Growers' Guide which reported the constituency political conventions of that summer, noted that nine of the twelve vice-presidents elected at U.F.A. constituency conventions were women, among whom was Mrs. Parlby. The paper stated: "Mrs. Walter Parlby needs no introduction . . . for she is perhaps the most devoted exponent of the farmers' movement that the whole movement possesses. Until the last convention (January, 1919) when the U.F.A. decided to take an active part in political affairs, politics were distasteful to her. At that time she said: 'If our political movement is to be a success, we must hold our ideals high, we must eliminate self-interest and put in its place self-sacrifice; we must eliminate the place-seekers, office-hunters, and grafters within our own ranks, and only be satisfied with the best.' "¹⁴

In July, 1919, a provincial by-election was called in the Cochrane riding where, for the first time,

the Liberals and leaders of the U.F.A. came into open conflict. The agrarian candidate, Alexander W. Moore, defeated his Liberal opponent, and brought wide publicity to the farmers' unrest in Alberta.¹⁵ The U.F.A. however, had not formally endorsed political action on a province-wide basis; this was done at the annual convention in 1921, when a resolution was carried declaring "that this convention . . . do recommend the adoption of this (political) action in every provincial constituency."¹⁶

That summer, in June 1921, a federal by-election took place in Medicine Hat. The U.F.A. nominated Robert Gardiner who defeated his Conservative opponent so decisively that the latter lost his deposit.¹⁷ Mr. Gardiner was the first of a group of capable men who represented Alberta in the House of Commons for fourteen years and included among others, H.E. Spencer, E.J. Garland, Alfred Speakman, W.T. Lucas, G.G. Coate, and William Irvine.

Before the Medicine Hat campaign was over, Premier Stewart called a provincial election for July 11. The U.F.A., which had established organizations in only sixteen of the sixty-one provincial ridings,

hurriedly set in motion plans for completing the organization of the rural constituencies. By nomination day in July, the farmers had placed forty-eight candidates in the field, and in the election shortly afterward, surprised all of Canada by winning thirty-nine seats in a House of sixty-one.

As mentioned earlier, the rural women were keen for political action. Mrs. Parlby, whose constituency was Lacombe, planned to help in any way she could. One day in June she was called to the telephone and someone asked her if she would stand for nomination. She wrote about it afterwards: "I did some hard thinking. Had I the right to let down the women who had worked so hard for equal political rights with men? I decided it was my duty to allow my name to go up, if only to make the men realize that women are, after all, a fairly important section of our population. And, there was the comforting thought that the matter would end there. My name might be put up, but one of the men would receive the nomination of course. When the final vote was taken I found myself the farmers' candidate for my constituency. I didn't know whether to laugh or to cry."

Throughout most of the province, the campaign
19
was strenuous. The Liberals reminded the rural elec-

torate of the impressive list of provincial acts which had been passed at the request of the farmers' associations. The premier himself was personally popular with the farmers who did not oppose him in his own constituency. Government supporters pointed to the development of Alberta since 1905, and stated, with some justification, that this development was due in large measure to the policies of the provincial administration. The Conservative party was split into two factions and had disintegrated to such an extent that it ran candidates in very few constituencies. The U.F.A. did not assail greatly the government's record. It stressed the need of economy in administration, the abolition of the patronage system, the extension and improvement of educational facilities especially in rural areas, a stricter enforcement of prohibition, stronger attempts to obtain control of the natural resources, and encouragement of co-operative efforts in handling farm products so as to reduce the costs of production and distribution. It favoured the setting up of a Highways Commission to look into methods of establishing a sounder policy with regard to provincial roads, and it stated its belief in proportional representation and the preferential ballot as well as in direct legislation such as the initiative, referendum, and recall. A fact that cannot be stressed too empha-

tically is that the United Farmers of Alberta had no vision of winning the election in 1921; it hoped that its supporters would elect a number of farmer representatives who would express in the Legislature the needs of rural people more sympathetically and forcibly than had been done before.²⁰ Henry Wise Wood had predicted that his party would win approximately twenty²¹ seats.

In Lacombe the campaign was bitter. The Liberal candidate in the two-way contest was William F. Puffer, a rancher and business man, and an experienced politician. He and his adherents fought hard; not only did they stress the achievements and platform of their party, but they dealt in personalities as well. Mrs. Parlby recalls that the Liberals tried to raise doubts about her patriotism by pointing out that in 1899 she had gone to England for the birth of her son. She remembers further that she was opposed chiefly on the ground that as a woman, inexperienced in politics,²² she was unfit to legislate. She was aided immeasurably by the U.F.A. constituency association in the Lacombe riding which planned times and places of meetings, and took care of local advertising. In addition, she received general counsel and support from her campaign manager, Mr. C. Wolferston of Alix.

The central U.F.A. office in Calgary arranged for speakers from other parts of Alberta, as well as for campaign literature. Perhaps the hardest part of the whole election was the necessary travelling from one country point to another because the roads were very inadequate, especially in the rural districts. Sometimes, meetings were unavoidably late; one time Mrs. Parlby arrived at a country schoolhouse after eleven o'clock to find the building filled with loyal farm people.²³ She was encouraged (and at times surprised) by the extent of rural enthusiasm. She found to her relief that making numerous political speeches was not as strenuous as she had expected. Because of her long residence in the province and her work in the U.F.W.A. she was well-known in the majority of communities in her constituency. Her expenses were met chiefly by donations at meetings, picnics, and the like; there²⁴ were no U.F.A. campaign funds at that time or later. Mrs. Parlby must have been a somewhat unusual type of candidate in that her British reserve prevented her from being hearty or mingling easily with all classes of people. At any rate, she defeated Mr. Puffer and thus began a political career which continued until 1935. In 1926 she was opposed again by W. F. Puffer, and, in 1930 by J. A. Mackie, who was backed by the Conservatives and Liberals.

After the election, the U.F.A. members of the provincial house met in Calgary with the executive of the organization for the purpose of choosing a premier. It is likely that Henry Wise Wood who had not contested a seat, but who had been the dominant and best-liked figure among the farmers since 1916, was the first choice of

²⁵ the caucus. According to a recent book, Mr. Wood declined the premiership which was then offered to Herbert Greenfield, the member for Westlock. ²⁶ Mr. Greenfield

accepted, and began immediately to select members of his cabinet amid dire predictions in the press that the farmers "would lead Alberta into financial ruin and into

²⁷ political sovietism." On August 13, 1921, when the new government took over, the cabinet appointments were as follows: Premier, Provincial Treasurer, and Provincial Secretary: Herbert Greenfield; Attorney-General: John E. Brownlee; Minister of Public Works: Alexander Ross; Minister of Agriculture and Health: George Hoadley; Minister of Education: Perrin Baker; Minister of Railways and Telephones: Vernon Smith; Minister of Municipal Affairs: Richard G. Reid; and Minister Without Portfolio: Mrs. Irene Parlby.

Mrs. Parlby accepted her appointment in much the same spirit in which she had accepted the U.F.A. nomination in Lacombe: it was her duty to the women of the province and especially to those with whom she had

worked, to take an active part in public administration. She thought too, that in the cabinet she could exert her influence to further legislation relating to social welfare, education, and health, which she had stressed in the U.F.W.A.²⁸

When Mr. Greenfield had asked her to become Minister Without Portfolio he had stated that if she were given a portfolio she would have to go back to her constituency for re-election, and since she had experienced a hard campaign, he did not want her to go through that again.²⁹

He wished her to be in the cabinet because of her proven ability as an organizer of the U.F.W.A., her wide education, and her prominence among the women of Alberta.³⁰ Perhaps if Mrs. Parlby had been ^{more} aggressive she might have been offered a portfolio. That may be wishful thinking, however, for in 1921 the women of the province had had the franchise but five years, and even today it is unusual for a woman to reach the best positions in almost any line of endeavour. Then, as always, Mrs. Parlby was deeply attached to her home. Had she taken upon herself the administration of a department, she would have had to live in Edmonton, perhaps over the protests of her family. Recently she wrote: "I am not at all sure I would have sacrificed our home life for the sake of a portfolio However I did not have the necessity of facing that problem."³¹

The year 1921 was a busy and exacting time. In her new position in the government, Mrs. Parlby was expected to attend all important cabinet meetings. This necessitated a good deal of travelling between Edmonton and Alix. In the fall of 1921 "Dartmoor" was rented and a smaller farm named "Manadon" was bought.³² Though the new place, which was nearer the village, was managed more easily and efficiently, it lacked some things which the family missed very much: the lake, the birds, and the seclusion. Throughout the constituency Mrs. Parlby met delegations, spoke at local meetings, and listened to numerous requests, chiefly for roads. After every session of the legislature she travelled over the riding, explaining what had been done and indicating what was planned for the future.³³

As her experience and knowledge of government increased, so did her value to the cabinet. Since she was chosen "primarily as representing the women of the province and to bring the woman's viewpoint to the discussion of governmental affairs", she was consulted on all important matters affecting women and children or any other business in which it was known she was deeply interested.³⁴ Thus, in the shaping of policy she must have played a part out of proportion to her status as a minister without portfolio. Those of her cabinet

colleagues whom the writer had opportunities to interview, spoke with appreciation of her calm, balanced judgment, her well-informed mind, and her liberal humanitarian attitude. They mentioned that never was she domineering or verbose, and always she was regarded as an "equal among equals".³⁵ With her position in the government, however, Mrs. Parlby was not always content; she was often lonely and frustrated because she felt she had lost the independence of a private member, and in loyalty to the cabinet, she was at all times on the defensive for the administration.³⁶

The U.F.A. government directed the affairs of Alberta from 1921 to 1935, during which time it had to contend with generally harsh economic conditions. "The decade of the twenties in Alberta was marked by a sharp and short downturn in prices, income and unemployment in 1921; by several years of depressed economic activity until 1925, broken by one good crop in 1923; and by intermittent and unspectacular recovery until 1929. After the setback of 1921, Alberta largely marked time until the middle of the decade and prosperity was not sustained when it did come."³⁷ In 1930 when the "great depression" arrived, the province was hit hard by declining prices and increasing unemp-

loyment. Only in 1936 were there definite signs that conditions were improving, but by that time the U.F.A. passed from the political scene.

From the outset when it found it was faced with "uncontrollable expenditures", such as "interest on the debt, advances to railways for the purpose of maintaining service . . . and the completion of public works projects begun in previous years", as well as the implementation of seed grain acts and relief acts because of low prices and the drought, the new government was forced to adopt economies.³⁸ This policy was a disappointment to many rural supporters of the U.F.A. administration which one author describes as "competent" and "increasingly conservative".³⁹ Since this thesis is not primarily concerned with the U.F.A. administration, references to legislation should be brief and general. Over a period of fourteen years some good laws were passed; most, however, were ^{concerned with} problems of everyday business. The outstanding achievements seem to be the following: Natural Resources Act, 1930; sale of the Alberta Government Railways, 1929; Debt Adjustment Acts, 1923 to 1924; Wheat Pool Act, 1924; Public Highways Acts, 1924 to 1935; Government Liquor Control Acts, 1923 to 1934; acts relating to health,

welfare, and the status of women, and the reorganiza-
tion of accounting techniques and procedures.⁴⁰

The transfer of the natural resources from the Dominion to the Province was made by an agreement of December, 1929. It was the result of protracted negotiations begun years before by the Liberals, and it met with general approval. Though financial returns were not large for some years, the recent widespread oil and gas discoveries have pointed up the importance of the transfer.

The sale of the provincial railways in 1929 to the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National railway companies enabled the government to get rid of a huge provincial burden, and to secure money which eased considerably the financial strains of the depression. The purchase price was \$25,000,000.

The Debt Adjustment Acts were protective measures aimed at keeping the farmers on the land at a time during the depression when many grain growers were faced with loss of their holdings. They were the first of their kind in Canada, and proved a success chiefly because, as a result of the acts, voluntary agreements between creditors and debtors give many a farmer a "new
⁴¹lease on life."

By the Wheat Pool Act of 1924, the government incorporated a new producer co-operative, the Alberta Co-operative Wheat Producers, Ltd., through which some 29,000 farmers that year contracted to sell their wheat. Today, the Pool operates 488 elevators and is owned by its 55,000 members. The Highways Act laid the groundwork for a long-range system of main and secondary roads, in spite of the economy and retrenchment. By the Liquor Control Acts that were passed as a result of a referendum in December, 1923, in which a majority of Albertans voted against liquor prohibition, the sale of intoxicants was placed under provincial administration. By these acts, the government hoped to lessen the immorality and lawlessness that stemmed from the illegal manufacture of liquor. Any financial gains that accrued went into the provincial treasury. In 1924 the government instituted a reorganization of accounting techniques and procedures. The system that was evolved proved so successful that it became a model for public accounts in other provinces.⁴²

Mrs. Parlby was in favour of all the above legislation which she considered sound and progressive.⁴³ Though she took an active part in cabinet meetings, proposed legislation which interested her most, was related to public health and welfare, education, and

protective laws for women and children. Her views on such matters were considered carefully and she consulted often with the attorney-general and the ministers of health and education.

In the legislature, nearly all the bills were introduced by ministers of specific departments. Therefore, Mrs. Parlby did not sponsor many measures. Newspaper reports concerned with the Alberta sessions of 1921 to 1935 did not mention her frequently. As a rule, the premier, ministers of departments, and opposition leaders were the ones who made the headlines.

The Honorable George Hoadley, Minister of Health, brought in numerous bills whose aim was to increase health services throughout the province. According to an official of the department, now retired, Mrs. Parlby was a "tower of strength" to Mr. Hoadley whose proposed legislation she supported strongly.⁴⁴ By a series of Public Health Acts from 1923 to 1934, travelling and operative clinics as well as dental clinics were established in eleven rural districts, the public health nursing services^{were} increased, and the first Health Districts at Red Deer and High River were organized; pre-natal clinics and men-

tal health clinics were instituted; health education services were expanded to include films, radio talks, and lectures.⁴⁵ In 1923, the Ponoka Mental Hospital was the first institution of its kind in Canada to begin treatment of general paralysis of the 'insane by inoculating patients with malaria. In 1925, the Central Alberta Sanitorium of Calgary came under provincial control and stimulated anti-tuberculosis work. The next year, Mr. Hoadley introduced an amendment to the Medical Profession Act designed to prevent medical practitioners from setting themselves up as specialists, unless fully qualified as such in the opinion of the University of Alberta. This law has aided in raising the qualifications generally of Alberta doctors. Several Mental Defectives Acts provided for additional accommodation at mental institutions, more humane treatment for patients, and a start in post-discharge inspections. A highly controversial bill was the Sexual Sterilization Act which applied to certain types of insane persons. Mrs. Parlby remembers that she heard from scores of people who had strong views about the bill's morality. Municipal Hospitals Acts encouraged the establishment of small hospitals by permitting, for the first time, the imposition of a special tax for the support of small hospitals in rural districts. Mrs. Parlby had a genuine respect for Mr. Hoadley whose

vision and perseverance she admired. She feels that much was accomplished from 1921 to 1935 in health services, and that more would have been done were it not for the financial strains of the depression.⁴⁶

Numerous bills pertaining to education came before the legislature. The long list of amendments to The School Act implies that the Honorable Perren Baker was an industrious official. Among some of the improvements and innovations were: the extension of teacher training, the establishment of the first rural high schools, and the beginning⁴⁷ of correspondence courses in public school subjects. In 1929 the Minister of Education introduced a new School Act which was a radical departure from anything done before in the province. The bill provided for the equalization of taxes and a fixed schedule of salaries in all large divisions comprising a number of districts. It was withdrawn because of the clamour of opposition from school trustees and others who resented any loss of local autonomy, and was not made law until the U.F.A. had passed from office. Mrs. Parlby gave the bill her support; as a matter of record the U.F.W.A. at one of its conventions in the early 1920's, had advocated the need of large administrative units for the operation of schools.⁴⁸ Not only was she concerned with the improve-

ment of education facilities generally, she was hopeful that because of better schools in rural areas, more young people would remain on the farms.

The story of legislation affecting women and children in Alberta goes back to the time of the Liberal administration which passed female suffrage and dower acts. From early years, the U.F.W.A. and other interested groups stressed the need for additional laws to increase the legal rights of women and the protection of children. Generally speaking, the men of the province, and especially those in the U.F.A. were sympathetic with these wishes; thus, it is not surprising that the farmers' government passed numerous laws which not only benefitted minors but helped to equalize the status of the sexes. Mrs. Parlby took a leading part in the enactment of such legislation. In 1922 she introduced a bill requiring minimum wages for women which was the first of its kind in Alberta, and though withdrawn, was the forerunner of a broader and fairer bill three years later.⁴⁹ The following session she sponsored the Children of Unmarried Parents Act which permitted an unmarried mother to obtain financial assistance by legal means from the father of her child. The bill aroused furious debate especially among the opposition, but it passed easily and became a landmark in social

legislation in Alberta.⁵⁰ Other welfare measures which Mrs. Parlby supported were the Child Welfare Acts, the Official Guardian Act, the Alimony Orders Enforcement Act, the Domestic Relations Act, and the Maintenance Order Act. She spoke on behalf of Amendments to the Dower Act which the attorney-general introduced in 1926, whereby a wife was guaranteed the use of a homestead during her husband's lifetime, and the ownership of furniture and other chattels after his death.⁵¹ She defended strongly the Sex Disqualification Act which increased the security and bargaining power of women, married or single.⁵² Additional welfare measures were the Mothers' Allowance Act, Old Age Pensions Act, and the Unemployment Relief Act, which, though not as generous as hoped for, were helpful in bringing a measure of relief to the needy. It is interesting to note that among thirty-two acts (in 1945) which affected women and children in Alberta, eighteen had been passed or amended by the U.F.A. government.⁵³ There is little doubt that in the enactment of most of these bills,⁵⁴ Mrs. Parlby was an effective and consistent advocate.

Every session of the legislature was livened by good speeches from both sides of the House. Apparently there was no dearth of good debaters. The member from Lacombe spoke rarely and only when she felt she had

something definite and relevant to say. Whenever she did take the floor she was listened to with interest and respect.⁵⁵ In 1922 a newspaperman wrote: "If all orators spoke with the culture . . . and sincerity of the Honorable Irene Parlby, the world of public affairs would be the better off . . . she is in every way a rare treat to listen to."⁵⁶ On the few occasions when she participated in debate, she sometimes surprised her listeners by sharp and forceful criticism. During the session of 1927, Mr. Joseph T. Shaw, the Liberal leader, attacked the government severely; among his remarks were acid comments about the travelling clinics, the Committee on Women's Rights (of which Mrs. Parlby was the chairman) and a text book authorized by the Department of Education. Mrs. Parlby replied. She referred sadly to Captain Shaw as a Sir Galahad in whom she once had high hopes but who had returned to the same old fold (Liberalism), saying the same old things. She wished to assure him that the Committee on Women's Rights had not been "wasting its time and the country's money basking in the sunshine of the Pacific Coast under pretense of bringing back brand-new legislation from the United States", that the members "did not pursue the glorious abandon of the Liberal Party with regard to the provincial treasury", though it was her opinion that "the women of the province were as worthy of

governmental expenditures as grain and livestock upon which no government hesitated to spend freely." She had noticed that the honorable member had given the Liberals credit for aiding women, yet "they (the Liberals) had waged a political campaign against a woman on the one and only ground that the candidate, being a woman, was neither a responsible citizen nor a fit representative of the people."⁵⁷ As for the criticism about text books, she questioned the sort of Canadian patriotism which "shudders when it reads 'The Star-Spangled Banner' in a Latin text used in Alberta -- always provided anybody could recognize 'The Star-Spangled Banner' in Latin, which is doubtful."⁵⁸ One reporter said that "her words tinkled like hailstones on a metal roof;"⁵⁹ another stated that "she administered rebuke enough . . . to last the member from Calgary the remainder of the session", and that "she opened a broadside which for intense brevity and point has seldom been equalled."⁶⁰ Outside of the legislature she tried, as much as possible, to form public opinion. With this view she spoke to service clubs and other organizations where she came in contact with many people who were not connected in any way with her own political faith. Her work in Edmonton was lightened by close friendships she had made, especially in professional and university circles.

In addition to her cabinet duties, Mrs. Parlby undertook other activities on behalf of the government. In 1924 she went as an observer to a conference of the International Council of Women in Washington, D.C., in order to obtain information about women's activities in many parts of the world. In 1928, when the premier knew she was planning to visit England, he requested her to visit Denmark and Sweden with the purpose of studying the administration of co-operatives and the methods of education in the folk-schools.⁶¹ Mrs. Parlby spent several weeks in Scandinavia where she was deeply impressed by the efficient, country-wide administration of the Danish dairy and poultry co-operatives. She interviewed officials and obtained a great deal of information which she used to advantage later in lectures and articles in Alberta. Co-operation was a subject in which she had been very interested from the early U.F.A. days, and her experiences in Denmark added to her enthusiasm. Upon her return to Canada, she was a speaker in Regina at a meeting of the Co-operative Societies and the members of the Scottish and English Co-operative Wholesale Societies who were there as visitors. She remembers saying that she "envisaged the time when we would not only be marketing our grain and livestock through co-operative organizations, but we would be milling the grain into flour in our own co-operative

mills, processing our livestock in our great packing plants, eventually selling these products in our own stores, and even sending them across the seas to foreign markets in our own co-operatively-owned ships." She added: "We have a long way to go yet before that vision comes true, but I feel it will come in time. The prairie farmers who had the courage and initiative to start their own elevator system, later their Wheat Pool, the chain of co-operative dairy pools, and livestock marketing organizations, will eventually cover the whole field of their activities When consumers in the cities become more enlightened as to the advantages of the co-operative principles from the consumers' point of view, they will set up their own wholesale houses and stores. Then we shall have gone a long way towards a

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'Co-operative Democracy'."

Her report to the government and her addresses to the U.F.W.A. and others interested in forming co-operatives were an impetus to the growth of co-operative organizations in Alberta.

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She had also been impressed by what she had seen in the Danish folk-schools, and as a result became an early advocate of a more progressive

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type of education.

In 1930, Mrs. Parlby was appointed as a Canadian delegate to the Assembly of the League of Nations meeting

in Geneva. Afterward, while on a visit to England after leaving Switzerland, she became seriously ill. Though she recovered sufficiently to return to Canada, she suffered a relapse in Montreal where she was forced to remain for weeks in a hospital. Doctors advised her to give up all government activities. When she informed Premier Brownlee of this, she was asked to defer a final decision until she returned to Edmonton. Later, she agreed reluctantly to continue as a member of the legislature and a minister of the cabinet, but she knew she could not campaign again or continue much longer in

public service. She rested at "Manadon" but she was unable to attend her son's wedding in January or to be present at the 1931 session. The next year she was again in the House, carrying on as before, but conserving her strength when she could. In July, 1934, when the Lacombe Constituency Convention met, she announced that she would not stand for nomination, that the state of her health no longer allowed her to carry heavy duties. She said, "I will continue to be a member of the organization . . . as long as I live. My whole-hearted support of and sympathy with the U.F.A. movement is not a whit diminished by my intention not to again seek nomination as a U.F.A. candidate."

The Edmonton Journal, seldom a U.F.A. supporter, commented as follows: "She had to shoulder a heavy burden. She was expected to watch all

legislative and administrative development closely with a view to safeguarding the particular interests of her sex. This she did most faithfully, and the measures that she herself introduced have had a large influence.

"She has set a high standard in every way for Canadian women engaging in political careers to follow. It must mean a great deal to have had a pioneer in this field of the character of Mrs. Parlby." ⁶⁸

That summer when Premier R. G. Reid re-organized the cabinet after J. E. Brownlee had resigned, ⁶⁹ Mrs. Parlby was persuaded to remain as Minister Without Portfolio until the election of the next year. In the campaign of 1935 she helped when she could, though she was not well enough to speak and write as much as she wished. She was unaware that the U.F.A. was so close to the verge of defeat.

In Alberta, as in the rest of Canada, economic distress was widespread. The depression was then in its sixth year. To many people, the U.F.A., which had been in power since 1921, seemed incapable of finding a satisfactory solution to the difficulties of the province. The new Social Credit Party under Mr. Aberhart, with its

denunciations of financial interests, its economic theory of a "just price", and its promise of a monthly dividend, offered hope to a public weary of hardship. In vain did the government stand on its record. Social Credit swept the province so effectively that not a single U.F.A. candidate was returned. In September Premier Reid resigned and Mr. Aberhart took office. The United Farmers' participation in politics was at
⁷⁰
 an end.

Mrs. Parlby was content to rest at home, surrounded by her family. As she thought over her years of service in the government, she hoped that here and there she had made some worthwhile contributions to the life of the province where she had lived so long. A few months before, in May, 1935, the University of Alberta had conferred upon her the honorary degree of Doctor
⁷¹
 of Laws. At that time, President Wallace had said: "In shaping of the policies in one of the great social movements among women in our country, Mary Irene Parlby has played a leading part. As second president of the United Farm Women of Alberta, she stressed the importance of education as the fundamental basis on which the social and political structure must be laid. As a member of the government, her concern has been with social legislation which might achieve a more

equitable distribution of the burdens of life.

"As the representative of the women of Canada at the assembly of the League of Nations, she gave of her great abilities in the cause of peace among nations, a cause of which her name has become known throughout our land.

"Mr. Chancellor, in presenting Irene Parlby as the first woman to receive the degree of Doctor of Laws from the University of Alberta, we honour one who has already won the high esteem of all men and women in the province which she has so signally served."⁷²

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1. Rolph, William Kirby: Henry Wise Wood of Alberta, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1950, pp.31-32.
 2. Sharp, Paul F.: The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1948; ch.3.
 3. The "Canadian Council of Agriculture", formed in 1909, was made up originally of the executive officers of the three prairie farmers' associations and the Dominion Grange of Ontario. Later it included also the executive officers of the farmer-owned grain companies, The Grain Growers' Guide, and the United Farmers of Ontario.
 4. Rolph, William Kirby: Henry Wise Wood of Alberta, p.41.
 5. Ibid., p. 52
 6. Ibid., ch. 3.

7. Wood, Louis Aubrey: History of the Farmers' Movements in Canada, Toronto, The Ryerson Press, 1924, pp. 169-177.
8. Rolph, William Kirby: Henry Wise Wood of Alberta, p. 36.
9. Ibid., p. 52
10. Sharp, Paul F.: The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada, pp. 77,78. The Non-Partisan League was an agrarian socialist party which was formed first in North Dakota in 1915.
11. Morton, W.L.: The Progressive Party in Canada, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1950, pp. 46,47.
12. Ibid., p. 48
13. Wood, Louis Aubrey: History of the Farmers' Movements in Canada, p. 338.
14. The Grain Growers' Guide, September 17, 1919.
15. Rolph, William Kirby: Henry Wise Wood of Alberta, p. 86. It might be interesting to state that during the Cochrane by-election Mrs. Parlby made her first political speech.
16. Rolph, William Kirby: Henry Wise Wood of Alberta, p. 96.
17. Ibid., p. 98
18. Parlby, Irene: "A While Ago - and Today", in The Canadian Magazine, July, 1928.
19. Information about the election platforms came chiefly from The Edmonton Journal, The Edmonton Bulletin and The Grain Growers' Guide, June and July, 1921.
20. Interviews with Mrs. Irene Parlby, April 11, 1952, and with Mr. R. G. Reid, April 9, 1953.
21. Rolph, William Kirby: Henry Wise Wood of Alberta, p. 101.
22. In actual fact, Mrs. Parlby had returned to the Old Country because of poor health and upon the

advice of physicians.

General information about the Lacombe campaign came from interviews with Mrs. Parlby, April, 1952, and from The Lacombe Western Globe, June, July, 1921.

23. Interview with Mr. Humphrey Parlby, April 13, 1952.
24. The writer received this information from all the U.F.A. supporters she interviewed.
25. Rolph, William Kirby: Henry Wise Wood of Alberta, p.102.
26. Ibid., p. 102
27. Sharp, Paul F.: The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada, p. 166.
28. See ch. 3. p. 36.
29. Statutes of Alberta, 1932, ch. 4: an amendment to the "Legislative Assembly Act" in 1932 eliminated the necessity of ministers of departments going back to their constituencies for re-election.
30. Interview with Mr. R. G. Reid, July 16, 1952.
31. Parlby, Mrs. Irene: Unpublished letter, April 10, 1953.
32. "Manadon" was named after the Parlby home in Devon, England.
33. Interview with Mrs. Irene Parlby, April 12, 1952.
34. Brownlee, J.E.: Unpublished letter, August 5, 1952; interviews with Mr. R. G. Reid and Mr. J. F. Lymburn, July and August, 1952.
35. Interviews with Mr. R. G. Reid, July, 1952, with Mr. J. F. Lymburn, August 1952, and with Mr. J.E. Brownlee, January, 1953.
36. Parlby, ^{Mrs.} Irene: Unpublished letter, April 10, 1953.
37. Hanson, E.J.: A Financial History of Alberta, 1905-1950, a dissertation submitted to Clark University, Worcester, Mass., 1951. p. 220.
38. Ibid., p. 234
39. Sharp, Paul F.: The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada, p. 166.

40. For detailed information regarding the acts mentioned here, the reader can refer to Statutes of Alberta, 1921 to 1935; the tables found in the pink section of Statutes of Alberta, 1935, will give the location of each act. A further reference is E. J. Hanson's Financial History of Alberta, 1905-1950, chapters 6 and 7.
41. Interview with Miss J. McCallum, April 8, 1953.
42. Hanson, E.J.: A Financial History of Alberta, 1905-1950, p. 95; interview with Mr. J. E. Brownlee, January 2, 1953.
43. Interview with Mrs. Irene Parlby, April 13, 1952.
44. Interview with Dr. M. R. Bow, April 7, 1953.
45. Additional references regarding health legislation are found in the general summaries at the beginning of each Report of the Public Health Department, 1921 to 1935. These were made available to the writer in the office of the Deputy Minister of Health, Government of Alberta, Edmonton.
46. Parlby, ^{Mrs.}Irene: Unpublished letter, April 3, 1953.
47. Interview with Mr. E. C. Stehelin, May 10, 1952.
48. Reports and Addresses of the United Farm Women of Alberta, January, 1921.
49. Minimum Wage Act, Statutes of Alberta, 1925, ch. 3.
50. Interview with Mr. Charles Hill, April 8, 1953. Mr. Hill told the writer that Mrs. Parlby often discussed with him legislation and other matters in connection with welfare conditions in Alberta.
51. The Edmonton Journal, March 30, 1926.
52. Interview with Mr. J. F. Lymburn, August 11, 1952.
53. The writer received a copy of "Legislation Affecting Women and Children in Alberta" which was prepared in 1945 by the Attorney-General's Department, Government of Alberta, Edmonton.
54. The opinion expressed here developed from interviews with Mr. J. E. Brownlee and Mr. J. F. Lymburn, with

members of the opposition including Mr. J. J. Bowlen and Mr. F. R. Falconer, and with Mr. T. A. Mansell and Mr. W. Norman Smith, who reported many of the sessions of 1921 to 1935.

55. Ibid.
56. The Edmonton Journal, February 10, 1922.
57. This referred to the election campaign in Lacombe in 1921 and 1926.
58. The Edmonton Journal, February 15, 1927.
59. Ibid., February 15, 1927.
60. The U.F.A., February 23, 1927.
61. At this time there was widespread interest in Alberta regarding co-operatives. The U.F.A. government encouraged and aided the establishment of numerous co-operative ventures.
62. Parlby, Mrs. Irene: Unpublished letter, April 9, 1953.
63. Interview with Mr. Norman Priestley, January 2, 1953.
64. Mrs. Parlby's report concerning education in Denmark was re-printed in The Alberta Teachers' Magazine, March, 1929.
65. See ch. 5, p. 91.
66. Interview with Mrs. Irene Parlby, April 13, 1952.
67. The Edmonton Journal, July 24, 1934.
68. Ibid., July 26, 1934.
69. Premier Brownlee was a defendant in 1934 in a seduction case. He resigned in July of that year and was succeeded by the provincial treasurer, Mr. R. G. Reid.
70. Information relating to the Alberta election of 1935 was obtained from The Edmonton Journal and The Edmonton Bulletin of June, July and August, 1935, and in the columns of The U.F.A.

71. Similar degrees had been conferred upon Premier J. E. Brownlee in 1928 and upon Henry Wise Wood in 1929.
72. The Edmonton Bulletin, May 15, 1935.

CHAPTER FIVE

Other Interests and Activities

In reminiscing about her girlhood Mrs. Parlby once said, "I seemed to enjoy everything".¹ That statement reflects something of the varied activities and interests that have engaged Mrs. Parlby's time since 1897. In addition to her work in the "United Farm Women of Alberta", and in the government of the Province of Alberta, there are other sides to her career that deserve special mention.

Her chief interests have always been her home and family. Of necessity the first years at Dartmoor were very busy: she had much to learn about running a household and trying to be a successful farm wife and mother. She had to use her imagination and ingenuity to bring some semblance of comfort and attractiveness into the small dwelling. Over the years she succeeded in making the cabin, which was enlarged gradually, a place of charm and friendliness.² Afterwards, when public service beckoned, she tried to ensure that her work did not affect the ties that bound her to her home. It may be significant that her first public address to the "United Farm Women" was entitled "Woman's Place in the Nation", in which

she emphasized the important role of wives and mothers as homemakers and character builders.³ People who had seen Mrs. Parlby in the Legislature and then had occasion to visit "Manadon" were often surprised to find that the Minister Without Portfolio was happiest in the midst⁴ of family and garden.

For fifty-five years, Mrs. Parlby's chief hobby has been gardening. In 1897 she sent to England for seeds and books and by the following summer had the beginnings of a garden on the south slope to the lake. She recalls that everyone did not take kindly to her efforts: one hired man thought she was wasting her time. "What's the use of it?" he demanded. Since the men were too busy to help her, she had to learn by trial-and-error, and from knowledge gained through reading articles and books about horticulture. Gradually, as her skill developed she became something of a local authority. She thinks that it was around 1920 when she began writing articles about gardening for "The Grain Growers' Guide". She continues even now to fill scrapbooks with interesting clippings concerning gardening hints. A garden always meant more to her than just a piece of ground where one can grow things. Years ago she copied a few lines that expressed beautifully what a garden could give her: "Everybody needs beauty

as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and cheer, and give strength to body and soul alike." ⁵ Each spring and summer her gardening occupies much of her time and continues to bring her pleasure and relaxation.

Another hobby is writing. As early as those far-off days in India, Irene, with the help of a few other teen-agers, edited a small magazine "just for fun". Not long after she settled in Canada, Mrs. Parlby wrote a letter to an English periodical in reply to an article which criticized young British immigrants in Ontario. To her surprise she received a five-pound ⁶ cheque from the editor as payment. While she was helping to organize the U.F.W.A., her first articles on gardening appeared in The Grain Growers' Guide. She wrote about other things as well, such as current ⁷ affairs, homely philosophy, the values of co-operation. She also wrote for The Canadian Magazine, The Nor'-West Farmer, The Family Herald and Weekly Star, and The U.F.A. Generally, she addressed herself to women, though her articles on politics and co-operatives were of equal interest to men. In the opinion of Amy J. Roe, Home Editor of The Country Guide, "She (Mrs. Parlby) typified and expressed ably the need for beauty in the

home. Her idealism, tolerance, and good humour make her a valuable spokesman for rural women." ⁸ Another person remarked that "hers was one of the forces that kept idealism alive in the farmers' movement." ⁹

In a previous chapter mention has been made of Mrs. Parlby's ability as a speaker. Previous to 1916, she had little idea that she could speak effectively in public. Practise came with work in the U.F.W.A. and in the government. Her speeches read more seriously than many of her articles, especially when she felt deeply. Sometimes she spoke outside of Alberta and on a few occasions when she was abroad she addressed meetings in the Old Country. ¹⁰ Once, while visiting in Britain in 1928, she was asked to describe her tour of Sweden and Denmark to a Conservative farmers' rally. After she had finished her talk one of the officials on the platform suggested that she remain in England: they might like her to be a Conservative candidate!

Her radio work began when she made occasional broadcasts, chiefly to farm people, over C.K.U.A., the University of Alberta station. ¹¹ In February, 1934, she spoke over a nation-wide radio hook-up on the topic: "What Might Happen to Canada If the Collective System Were Abandoned" in which she discussed the possibilities

of a closer union with either the United States or the Commonwealth if the League of Nations were to fail.¹²

In February, 1938, she took part in a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation series entitled "I Shall Never Forget", when she told of pioneer days as she knew them.¹³

The next month she participated in another series called "Whither Democracy"; at that time she differed sharply

with Premier Aberhart of Alberta who was on the same program.¹⁴ Her listeners were divided in their reactions.

The General Manager of the C.B.C. wrote her personally to compliment her.¹⁵ Others felt she had spoken too strongly against the Alberta Government.

One man from Toronto who said that he often listened to Father Coughlin and Huey Long, was convinced that Social Credit was the correct solution to the world's ills and requested additional propaganda. It was apparent that he had written to the wrong speaker.

Later that year on December 11, 1938, Mrs. Parlby appeared on a radio forum which discussed "The Position of Women in Canada".¹⁶ B. K. Sandwell, distinguished editor of "Toronto Saturday Night" presided, while the other speaker was Madame Thérèse Casgrain of Quebec. In the Alberta election of 1940 Mrs. Parlby made her last political broadcast in support of the

"Independent Citizens' Association",¹⁷ which was opposed to the Social Credit Party. In March, 1952, while visiting in Edmonton, she spoke over Radio Station C.F.R.N. to the farm women of Alberta in response to a request by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture.¹⁸ Again one heard the clear, rich, well-modulated voice, and many a person must have been carried in memory to years gone by.

Apparently her radio work met with considerable approval. One letter from a prominent business leader mentions one of her broadcasts as "most admirable in form, matter, and delivery . . . made a great impression on everyone who heard it."¹⁹ Another referred to her presentation as "logical, reasonable and dignified."²⁰ Still another from a man well-known in radio work, had this to say: "Your all too rare broadcasts in the past have given so much delight that everyone who has heard you is anxious for you to speak again."²¹ Mrs. Parlby enjoyed receiving letters including those which expressed disagreement with her views, and she tried as much as possible to answer requests for information, or to elaborate further on a controversial point.²² In her writing, speaking, and broadcasting, she received help and encouragement from her husband who read her work carefully and was a constant source of suggestion.

She wrote and rewrote whatever she was preparing because she seldom felt satisfied with the first few attempts.

In August, 1927, Mrs. Emily Murphy, a police magistrate in Edmonton, invited four women to her home. Her guests were Mrs. Louise McKinney, ex-M.L.A., Mrs. Henrietta Edwards, author of a book entitled "Laws Relating to Women", Mrs. Nellie McClung, a well-known writer, and Mrs. Irene Parlby. Mrs. Murphy felt that it was time for the Canadian Parliament to decide whether or not women could be appointed to the Senate. The feeling in Ottawa was to the effect that women could not, that the word "persons" in the clause in the British North America Act dealing with Senate appointments, referred to men only. Mrs. Murphy had found out that any five people, British subjects, could petition Parliament for the interpretation of any act. Accordingly, she requested her guests to sign a petition with her. She felt that she had chosen four of Alberta's best-known women whose prestige and ability would help in interesting the general public in the interpretation of Clause 24 of the B.N.A. Act. The petition, duly signed, went to Ottawa where on April 24, 1928, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that women were ineligible for Senate appointments since, in the opinion of four of

the five judges, women were not "persons". Shortly afterward, the five Albertans appealed to the Privy Council, where the case was heard in October, 1929. Alberta which was the only Canadian province to aid the five women, sent its Attorney-General, Mr. J. F. Lymburn, to assist Mr. N. W. Rowell, the chief counsel. On October 18, the Privy Council gave its decision: it overruled the Supreme Court of Canada and declared that women could be appointed to the Senate.²³ On that day The Edmonton Journal ran a headline which read: "They're All 'Persons' Now", under which were pictures of Mrs. Murphy and her four co-appellants.

On June 11, 1933, a memorial plaque donated by the Business and Professional Women of Canada, was unveiled in the lobby of the Canadian Senate. It was placed there in honour of the five Albertans who "caused steps to be taken resulting in the recognition by the Privy Council of women as persons eligible for appointment to the Senate of Canada."

Mrs. Parlby is emphatic in saying that her part in the now famous case was small and that the credit is Mrs. Murphy's. However, since the result was a milestone on the road toward greater political equality of

the sexes, each signatory of the petition deserves recognition from the women of Canada. Mrs. Parlby regrets that Mrs. Murphy was not appointed the first woman senator and that so few of her sex have reached the Upper House. She is rather disappointed that Canadian women in general have taken little advantage of the opportunities offered in the political field, but for this she thinks there are several good reasons: the comparatively short time that women have had the franchise, the emphasis that so many women place on their domestic and social life to the exclusion of wider interests, the difficulty of obtaining strong support from women for those of their sex who do try to attain public office, and the small encouragement given to women by so many men who appear to regard the political field as their own "private preserve". She is hopeful that in the near future more Canadian women will awaken to political consciousness and take their places in greater numbers in the councils of their nation.²⁴

Another memorable occasion in the life of Mrs. Parlby was her appointment as a delegate to the League of Nations. One summer day, August 13, 1930, she received a telegram from Prime Minister R. B. Bennett which read: "I would be greatly pleased and I believe

the Canadian people would be gratified if you could permit me to name you as one of our representatives at the Assembly of the League of Nations which convenes on September Fifth . . . ²⁵ Mrs. Parlby at once communicated with ^{the} Honorable George Hoadley, Minister of Health and Acting Premier, who advised her to accept. This she did with a great deal of pleasure. Her appointment met with general approval. She heard from Sir Robert Borden who was chief delegate; his letter read in part: "I learn from the Press this morning that you are to be one of the Canadian representatives at the approaching meeting of the League of Nations Assembly. It gives me great pleasure to know that you will be one of the party." ²⁶ The Vancouver Province of August 15, 1930, in commenting upon the selection of delegates, stated: "Premier Bennett's appointment of Mrs. Parlby is a gracious gesture which will certainly do him no harm in the goodwill of his early days of office. It is a good appointment on its merits; it is a compliment to the women of Canada . . . it is evidence that the Prime Minister is strong enough to go outside the ranks of his own party to find the right choice for the right occasion." The Edmonton Journal spoke of her appointment as a "well-deserved honour", mentioned her "unique position in public life", said that she was a "close student of interna-

tional problems", and that "of her qualifications for the duties she is undertaking there is no doubt."²⁷
 The Alberta Cabinet was especially pleased as were the²⁸
 farm organizations in the province.

On September 7, 1930, Mrs. Parlby was in Geneva where she joined Sir Robert Borden and the other delegate, Senator Joseph Chapais. The three substitutes were Honorable Phillippe Roy, Canadian Minister in Paris, Dr. Walter Riddell, Canadian Advisory Officer at Geneva, and Colonel George Vanier, Canadian Representative on the Permanent Advisory Commission. Altogether, fifty-two nations sent representatives to the Assembly which met for the first time in its new quarters in the Bâtiment Electoral. Mr.^c Zumeta of Venezuela, President of the Council, presided over the first meeting and delivered the opening address. Among the delegations were some of the foremost men in international affairs whom Mrs. Parlby observed with intense interest. She was impressed most of all by Premier Aristide Briand of France, Sir Eric Drummond, Secretary-General of the League, and Lord Robert Cecil of Great Britain. Some of the other personalities she remembers particularly are Eleutherios Venezelos of Greece, Count Albert Apponyi of Hungary, Dr. Julius Curtius

of Germany, Nicholas Titulesco of Rumania (who was elected President), and Susan Lawrence, Arthur Henderson, and Hugh Dalton, all of Britain. The work of the Assembly was divided among six committees which were set up shortly after the president was chosen. Sir Robert Borden was elected chairman of the Sixth Committee, which dealt with political questions. Mrs. Parlby sat on the Fifth Committee which was concerned with social questions, and the First Committee which dealt with legal and constitutional problems. To her regret she did not speak in the Assembly but she made an address in the Fifth Committee. As she heard reports, and listened to debates and discussions, she was impressed by the amount of work which the League was attempting to do. She began to appreciate the scope of the tremendous difficulties that stood in the way of international trust and co-operation. Yet she felt that little by little the League of Nations was building machinery for the prevention of war and the easing of tensions throughout the world.

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Mrs. Parlby states that her experience in Geneva was one of the highlights in her life. As she saw people from many nations trying to solve common problems she thought she glimpsed the beginnings of real world government and the working out of a great

ideal. Afterwards when she was home in Canada she spoke whenever she could before clubs and over the radio about the achievements and hopes of the League of Nations, and the need for collective security and international goodwill.³⁰

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1. Interview with Mrs. Irene Parlby, April 12, 1952.
 2. See photograph No. 4.
 3. Reports and Addresses of the United Farmers of Alberta, 1916.
 4. The Edmonton Journal, June 5, 1926.
 5. The writer found these lines in an undated article entitled "Gardener's All" among Mrs. Parlby's personal papers.
 6. Mrs. Parlby thinks that the periodical to which she wrote was the National Review, published in London, England.
 7. Some representative titles are: "In the Legislative Mirror", May 10, 1922; "Fireside Garden Philosophy", March 1935; "The Great Adventure", April 1, 1927, which dealt with co-operation.
 8. Roe, Amy J.: Unpublished letter, August 7, 1952.
 9. Interview with Mr. Norman F. Priestley, January 2, 1953.
 10. Mrs. Parlby remembers speaking in Winnipeg upon her return from attending the International Council of Women in 1924; she also spoke in Ottawa while on her way to Geneva in 1930.
 11. Radio Station C.K.U.A. began operation on a small scale in 1923.

12. The Edmonton Journal, February 19, 1934.
13. Murray, Gladstone: Unpublished letter to Mrs. Irene Parlby, December 6, 1937.
14. The Edmonton Journal, March 28, 1938.
15. Murray, Gladstone: Unpublished letter to Mrs. Irene Parlby, March 30, 1938. The letter reads: "Permit me this note of special congratulation on your splendid broadcast on Sunday night. Everywhere I get the same enthusiastic opinion."
16. Buchanan, D. W.: Unpublished letter to Mrs. Irene Parlby, October 19, 1938, in which arrangements for the broadcast were outlined. Mr. Buchanan was a program director for the C.B.C. See Appendix A, p. 103.
17. Interview with Mr. J. Percy Page, September 20, 1952.
18. See Appendix C, p. 116.
19. Milner, H. R.: Unpublished letter to Mrs. Irene Parlby, March 31, 1938.
20. Roberts, W. R.: Unpublished letter to Mrs. Irene Parlby, April 3, 1938.
21. Brockington, Leonard W.: Unpublished letter to Mrs. Irene Parlby, November 28, 1938.
22. Mrs. Parlby gave more broadcasts than those mentioned here, but the records are not available for all, since radio stations seldom keep files on their speakers.
23. Mrs. Emily Murphy was known more familiarly to Canadians as "Janey Canuck". She was Canada's first woman police magistrate and a well-known suffragette. Cleverdon, Catherine Lyle: The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada, pp. 145-155.
24. Parlby, Mrs. Irene: Unpublished letter, April 4, 1952.
- 25-26. The original telegram and letter are also among Mrs. Parlby's personal papers.

27. The Edmonton Journal, August 16, 1930.
28. Interviews with Mrs. R. B. Gunn, February 10, 1952 and with Mr. J. F. Lymburn, August 11, 1952.
29. Interview with Mrs. Irene Parlby, April 11, 1952. Parlby, Honorable Irene: "The Great Adventure of International Co-operation", an address delivered to the United Farm Women of Alberta, January 1932.
30. At the present time Mrs. Parlby is a staunch supporter of the United Nations Organization.

CHAPTER SIX

Retirement, 1935 --.

In the autumn of 1935, Mrs. Parlby began to experience, for the first time in several years, a feeling of relaxation. Perhaps she had not realized before how much she had needed some relief from her many duties. She seemed content to have left completely the activities of public service.¹ Now and again she had a sense of loss for she had enjoyed working and meeting with government officials and others in political life.² However there was much to do on the farm, and she hoped to write an occasional article, spend extra time with her small grandson, and keep up more easily with correspondence.

The family circle was smaller. Her parents had died years before, her sisters had moved away, and only one of her three brothers remained at Haunted Lakes.³ Her son with his family lived in the neighbourhood as did the Edward Parllys who had kept their Long Valley Ranch along the lakeshore.

In Western Canada economic conditions improved somewhat but not to any large extent. In Alberta the

new administration tried to cope with provincial problems, and though it disappointed the hopes of some of the people, it seemed to retain considerable support. Mrs. Parlby continued to belong to the farm women's organization which, though divorced from politics, remained interested in rural affairs. She found time to resume writing, and, as mentioned earlier, made some broadcasts.

During World War II Mr. and Mrs. Parlby, in common with most Canadians, had an anxious time. They were concerned about relatives and friends in the Old Country, and ^{about} their son, who had enlisted in the King's Own Calgary Regiment and had gone overseas. In 1945 when the management of the farm became too heavy, they sold "Manadon" and moved into Alix where they stayed for four years. They were not happy in the village for never before in Canada had they lived anywhere but in the country.

After the war was over, Humphrey Parlby returned from abroad and decided to rehabilitate "Dartmoor" where the family had not lived since 1921. The old house was torn down and replaced by a new building on the same location where the original cabin had been. There he settled with his wife⁴ and two sons and there

in 1949 he was joined by his parents.

Walter Parlby who had been in failing health for a few years, died in January, 1952. His brother, Edward, had predeceased him by six months. Both had made their homes in the district since 1890 and had lived to see many changes in their adopted country.

The house at "Dartmoor" is full of family history. Among other things are old photographs and miniatures, Oxford rowing trophies, English willow-ware, a few pieces of antique furniture, and many books. Upstairs in the guest room is a writing desk which Mrs. Parlby gave her husband on their wedding day, and in a comfortable corner of the large living room are the beautiful Fores prints. The wide windows look out over the lake which from spring to fall is a safe home for the wild birds. Except for the sight of automobiles along the distant highway, and the sound of an occasional aeroplane, the scene is much the same as it has always been. Off to the southeast and rising over the treetops is the tower of an oil derrick. Perhaps a new age has come to the Buffalo Lake District!

Mrs. Parlby is happy at "Dartmoor" among her own people. Sometimes old friends visit her and once

in a while she travels to Edmonton. Since her health is quite good she does most of her own housework and continues her gardening. Her eyes are remarkably young and clear, and her mind is excellent; she reads extensively and keeps abreast of current news. Once she said, "Books and garden seeds are my extravagances." Her life has been full and satisfying, and in the opinion of the writer, her achievements and personal qualities merit the esteem in which she is regarded. From all those who were interviewed came expressions of admiration for Mrs. Parlby and her work. Surely it is unusual to hear such widespread approval of someone who spent so many years in the public eye! Her appointment by a Conservative prime minister as a delegate to the League of Nations, and the award to her of an honorary degree by the University of Alberta were tributes to the worth of the services she rendered.

Many years ago, when she was thinking about the pioneers of the West, she wrote: "We have travelled a long way. We have blazed a trail, and we have built a road for those who come after us."⁵ These words can be applied to Irene Parlby's own achievements, and to those of others like her, who gave generously of their talents to the development of Canada.

1. Interview with Mrs. H. Parlby, July 19, 1952.
2. Interview with Mrs. Irene Parlby, July 19, 1952.
3. Mrs. Parlby's brother, then living at Haunted Lakes was Ulric Marryat, who died in 1950. His family has remained in the district.
4. Mrs. Parlby's daughter-in-law is the former Beatrice Buckley whose father was the Member for Gleichen and the U.F.A. whip in the Alberta Legislature for many years.
5. Parlby, Mrs. Irene: "A While Ago - and Today!" in The Canadian Magazine, July, 1928.

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Appendix A.

THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN CANADA

Copy of an address given
by Mrs. Irene Parlby over
Radio Station C. J. C. A.,
Edmonton, December, 1938.

I wonder if you will agree with me, that one of the most exasperating characteristics of human beings, male or female, is the complacent way in which they take things for granted? Most of the worth while things in life such as freedom, justice, civil and political rights, progress in various fields of social betterment, have been won only through years of struggle and conflict. The heirs to these things however accept them, take them for granted, give them no more thought, than they give to the air they breathe, or the sun which lights and warms their world. Moreover the majority of these complacent people feel neither personal responsibility for guarding that which has been won, or for working for further progress.

In Western Canada many rights have been won for women over the years. They were won mostly by the quiet, steady work of the few, aided by the different womens' organizations which have come into being through the last quarter of a century. Because there was no such spectacular fight here, as for instance took place over the granting of the franchise to women in Britain, the winning of these various rights has been perhaps accepted in rather casual fashion. The women of the West would be astounded however if they woke up one day to find that they no longer possessed civil or political rights; that they could not vote in their local or provincial government elections, could not hold public office of any kind as members of school boards, municipal councils, or legislative assemblies; were debarred from equal educational opportunities with men in the Universities; found the professions of law, medicine, and other avenues closed to them on account of their sex; found that as married women they were unable to hold property in their own right, control their own earnings, or make contracts, that they had not equal guardianship rights over their own children, found themselves back in fact in the position of inferiority and inequality which used to be considered the rightful place for their sex. All these things were freely given

or remedied for the women of the West. With regard to political equality agitation commenced in Manitoba around 1912; the other provinces followed; women's organizations took the question up, petitions were circulated, governments were interviewed. The trumpets sounded and the walls of Jericho fell! Since that time in Alberta at least, there have always been at least one or two women in the legislature.

The progressive Farm Women's organizations in the three prairie provinces, from their inception took a strong stand on such questions as the position of women, Public Health and Education. The work they carried on in helping to educate public opinion played a large part in the establishment of rural Municipal Hospitals, Public Health work such as Child Welfare Clinics and Travelling Clinics, the establishment of Public Health nurses and especially that splendid Public Health District Nursing Service for the fringes of settlement, whose valiant work is far too little known except by those who benefit from it. It was to a great extent due also to the agitation of women's organizations that the public health work of the Province of Alberta was finally taken from its rather ridiculous position in the Department of Agriculture and dignified by a department of its own.

British Columbia and Alberta Legislative Assemblies have recognized the injustice of discriminating against woman on account of her sex and have passed Acts, entitled "The Sex Disqualification Removal Act" which provides that "A person shall not be disqualified by sex or marriage from the exercise of any public function, or from being appointed to or holding any civil or judicial office or post, or from entering or assuming or carrying on any civil profession or vocation, or for admission to any incorporated society." In these two Provinces also women are eligible for jury service.

In all the western provinces there is of course much legislation of a protective character for women. Dower Acts giving a wife a life interest in part of her husband's property, and in the three prairie provinces the right of equal guardianship and control of their children in the absence of a court order to the contrary.

Altogether I think we may say that the position and influence of women in Western Canada had advanced considerably over the years. There is of course still discrimination, conscious and unconscious. It is very rarely that you find a woman, however great her qualifications, in the higher paid jobs in the business world, in the educational field or in employment generally, and it is certainly a difficult thing for a woman to get a nomination at a political convention.

However these fields have belonged unchallenged to men for so many centuries, that it will naturally take women some time to reach a real equality; they have at least broken into political and other lines of endeavour, and as a result we have had for years at least a few women in legislatures, occasionally a woman police magistrate, juvenile court judges, justices of the peace, aldermen and women members of school boards. We have women practising as lawyers and doctors, women in business and some outstanding press women and writers.

Eternal vigilance of course is needed if women are not to lose some of the things they have gained; they need indeed to stand on guard! There are still far too many women whose mental horizons are bounded by the four walls of their homes and their little social activities. There are still too many who would like to keep them content within those boundaries, as a brake on human progress. But time and events move on in spite of them and gradually more are coming to see that those who would stultify the lives of women by holding them to an inferior position in civil and political life are doing an ill service to society as a whole.

I wonder if anyone reads "Benjamin Kidd" these days. In one of his books published at the close of the World War in which he deals with the failure of western knowledge and the gathering of world revolutionary forces, he develops a theme which should be a great inspiration to women to train and qualify themselves to be of greater service in the cause of civilization.

It is impossible in a few words to adequately present the argument of his whole book "The Science of Power". But roughly, and I quote his own words as much as possible - "Man is essentially a fighting pagan who has evolved a civilization based on force; that into

all the institutions he has created he has carried the spirit of war and the belief that force is the ultimate principle of the world. For this reason, in the interests of civilization the future centre of power must rest not in the fighting male of the race but in woman. Man, he contends, despises "the emotion of the Ideal, and does not recognize that this great force alone is capable of firing a people's imagination to build a civilization not resting on force. The particular qualities of Woman's mind, her greater recognition of the power of the ideal and her influence over the young make her peculiarly fitted for becoming this new centre of power, and he further declares that "the type of civilization which first organizes itself around this central capacity of woman's mind will have a stupendous advantage over all others in the coming struggle in the world".

As women we have achieved an improved status in many ways. We have largely taken that status for granted. We have not fully made use of it; we have not realized our power as a group; nor have we to any great extent qualified ourselves to use it for the benefit of civilization.

That great task is still before us.

Appendix B.

A WHILE AGO -- AND TODAY!
from ^{The} Canadian Magazine, July, 1928

By The Honorable Irene Parlby, M.L.A.

New ways! New thoughts! New achievements!
New trails to break for the pioneer!

Yes, the onset of civilization called for different qualities from those needed by the early settlers who sailed up the St. Lawrence, "a while ago".

There were still unknown trails to travel; there were still adventures for the adventuresome - but they were now chiefly adventures into the realm of ideas, rather than the blazing of a trail into the wilderness. Cultivation of the land must be followed by the cultivation of a worthy social and economic system of living.

As settlement increased, and the purely pastoral life gave place to a more intensive agriculture; as the cattle were driven further and further into the foothills, and great fields of golden grain covered their old stamping grounds, a new spirit crept over the land.

The old, careless freedom departed. Men grew suspicious, less friendly, and there were murmurs of exploitation and of rank injustices to the farmer. Underground rumblings of discontent were heard, and then outspoken words, and spasmodic attempts at organization, indifferent and more-or-less isolated parts of our Province of Alberta, small and rather vague beginnings of organization, but the erstwhile incoherent ideas gave way to more definite plans. And so began the organization of that powerful group known today throughout the length and breadth of Canada as the United Farmers of Alberta.

To our men must be given the credit of starting out upon this new adventure. But, just as the women had never hesitated to follow their men into the wilderness, to share with them its hardships and privations, so they were equally ready to take their part actively, in the new work to be done. Then, too, the

women were feeling the need of organization quite as keenly as were the men. For the same, and for yet more reasons, such as the need for closer intercourse with one another, they wanted a common meeting-ground to discuss co-operative effort, for the benefit of home and community life.

The men met over their business, occasionally, shipping stock, hauling grain to the elevators, taking various trips to the nearest town upon business connected with their work. But the women, busy "Marthas" "burdened with many cares" which demanded the utmost of their physical strength, had little time or inclination, in those days (when the automobile was still unknown), to take long, tedious trips to town.

Why should they? Why waste the golden hours in which work might be done? And what was there to do when they got there, save wearily stand and wait, while the men discussed their business, and the affairs of the nation, with their fellows? So, they mostly stayed at home, unless there was a sick neighbor to be nursed, or a baby to be helped into the world; and they remained, to a large extent, strangers to each other. Organization, they knew, would mean mutual interests and less loneliness.

I realized all this, yet, for myself, I was an "Old-Timer". Long years of scant settlement had made me very independent of people other than my own family. I found happiness in a sunset, or a rainbow. I had my family life, my books, and my garden. I found content - even excitement - in learning, little by little, how to grow, in prairie soil, the flowers which I had loved in England; in teaching them to adapt themselves to their new environment, as we human settlers from the Old Land had learned to do.

Thrones might totter in Europe; gigantic upheavals, physical or human, might take place, but I was much more interested in the task of bringing safely through the Winter, some perennial sent from home to make some corner of my garden "forever England". But however selfishly one may love the peaceful security of home; however remote one may feel from the world; it may happen as it did to me that "some fell clutch of circumstance" will reach out and drag one, willy-nilly, into a new and strange life and work.

It is amusing, in these days of the over-organization of women, to think back to the days when we started our first little club, to gather farm women into closer contact; amusing in these days of remarkable university extension service, travelling libraries, of radio, lectures, to think of our first attempt to secure reading matter for our members. I wrote a letter to the London "Spectator" asking readers to send us crumbs for their overabundance. What excitement we felt, when bundles reached us from every part of the world - England, South Africa, America - even Japan! Ye gods! What a varied and fascinating assortment of books and periodicals!

They brought pleasure to many a home during the empty years until the university extension service came to fill a great need. Our programmes were not exciting; they dealt, at first, with purely womanly things; friendly gatherings over our cups of tea, and we laid the beginnings of some warm friendships that have lasted through the years. How important I felt, when I was made secretary of that little club! With what care I wrote minutes and kept accounts! It was my first experience of organized activity, and I revelled in it with a joy which has sometimes been lacking in the various broader activities to which it finally led me.

The year 1916 found me on my way as elected delegate from my little local club, to the annual provincial convention of the "Women's Auxiliary to the United Farmers of Alberta" in Calgary. Quite a small gathering of women, as compared to our huge conventions of today.

Picture our absurd nervousness when we rose to give our reports, or offer suggestions. Where was the courage of the pioneer? We were scared to open our mouths; afraid to frame or move a resolution! Shaking knees! Trembling voices! But, before the close of the meetings, there came a greater poise, as the conviction grew that we had a service to perform, a contribution to make, not alone to the communities from which we came, but to the farmers' organization and to our provincial life.

We were groping blindly, at those first meetings, toward a vision but dimly discerned; a vision which was to be made clearer to us as the years went on.

I was elected president, with the gigantic and rather terrifying task of building up a provincial organization, of evolving policies, and fixing a goal toward which to work. We had no money to work with, no prestige, and were to co-operate with the men's group which, while outwardly polite, would not, at first, realize the added strength which the women would lend to their own movement.

It was my first introduction into life other than the sheltered home life which I had always known. I learned much in those years of my presidency, of human nature. I am still learning! "The greatest study of mankind is man!" (and the most illuminating, Mr. Pope!) It is a study which gives one, at times, the most intense pleasure and surprise; at other times, the grief of horrible disillusion!

I have "seen red" sometimes, in discovering injustices between men and women; injustices against women in man-made legislation, and injustices as between rich and poor. I found crude, wicked things; fighting against joy, and beauty, and high faith.

However, the conviction grew, with knowledge, that organization was needed to help "high faith" in the struggle to fight these ugly things which reared their heads in the outside world; to right wrongs which had become established, and to hold before the people a vision of "the New Community" toward which they might turn their eyes.

Our activities ranged themselves from the beginning, along certain practical lines of Public Health, Education, and Legislation respecting women and children. We strove for legislation to bring in our present Municipal Hospital system; we strove for, and obtained also, a certain number of highly trained maternity nurses for the outlying districts; for Public Health nurses who could inspect rural schools and hold clinics. Many of the policies which we advocated are to be found today embodied in our statutes. Yes, we have travelled a long way along the trails, since the days of 1896.

Four years of the provincial presidency of the United Farm Women of Alberta; four years of hard

work, with moments of hideous discouragement, yet with many pleasant memories, too - memories of finding, in remote and unexpected places, the pure gold of wonderful souls, of finding keen intellects lying dormant until the organization awakened them to the realization that they might serve their fellows, (yes, to find idealism in human nature, leave the crowded market places of the city, and travel the highways and the byways of the country-side).

At the end of four years, with the organization acknowledged as an important part of the U.F.A., its usefulness established, I told myself that it was permissible, without shirking, to return to the quiet life in which it was possible to forget "the world and its fretting". My home and garden, my music and books, and leisure to enjoy them to the full again, seemed the most desirable things in the world.

In 1921, a variety of circumstances combined to bring about the decision of the farmers' organization, to enter the political field. One day the telephone rang: "Will you accept a nomination?"

What a bolt from the blue to be hurled at a poor woman! Time was short in which to make a decision. I did some hard thinking. Had I the right to "let down" the women who had worked so hard for equal political rights with men? I decided that it was my duty to allow my name to go up, if only to make the men realize that women are, after all, a fairly important section of our population. And there was the comforting thought that the matter would end there. My name might be put up, but one of the men would receive the nomination, of course.

When the final vote was taken, I found myself the farmers' candidate for my constituency! (I didn't know whether to laugh or cry!)

That election was a bitter fight; fought principally by my opponents on the ground that I was a woman; therefore, totally unfitted to represent the people in such a serious business as that of legislation! But the farm people thought differently. I was elected with a comfortable majority; elected, not by women as a women's representative, but by those people, men and women, who felt that I understood something of their problems; something, also, of the ideals for which they stood.

So began my political life as Minister Without Portfolio in the Provincial Government. Of my work as a woman-Cabinet Minister, I shall not write at length; it is too long a story. However, I will answer here some questions which, most frequently, have been put to me as a woman in public life.

"Now, Mrs. Parlby, to be perfectly frank; do you really consider politics a woman's job?"

Perhaps the only answer to that is, that I have all the courage of my constituents' convictions! You see, in 1926, we had another election campaign, and I was re-elected, with a good majority, on the first count, over both Conservative and Liberal men candidates. Is that not sufficient justification for this particular woman in politics?

It is a comparatively simple matter - the election of a man. He may not be a particularly good man (I speak in the social sense); he need not even have unusually good judgment, or business acumen, but he is a man among men, nevertheless, and can generally rally enough voters to elect him.

The time, however, has not yet come when a woman will be elected, as a woman among women; where men will stand like a solid phalanx behind a man, for party reasons, perhaps, or because he is fighting a woman nominee, will stand behind him (whether they admire him personally or not), women will not stand as a solid unit behind a woman. So, if women claim politics as their due, in consideration of the fact that they number approximately half the population, they must, then, realize that they must stand for those things which are of vital interest to the electorate of men as well as of women.

For my own part, I say most emphatically that, if politics mean, as I take them to mean, the effort to secure, through legislative action, better conditions of life for the people, greater opportunities for our children, and other people's children (through more forward-looking educational and public-health activities, general social legislation for the more-unfortunate among us, regulation of those powerful enough to exploit our people, and general leadership in ideals of progress); then, it is most assuredly a woman's job, just as much as it is a man's job!

I do not say that it is every woman's job, any more than it is every man's job. As time goes on, certain qualifications will be recognized as necessary, by a more highly-educated electorate, whether the Legislator be man or woman. Today, women are on trial in the political field; very few have entered it. Every false step they take, every little remark which may sound foolish, is eagerly discussed and widely heralded abroad, with the cynical sneer: "What else can you expect of a woman?"!

Men act and speak foolishly, sometimes, blunder with disastrous results. Yet, have you ever heard man or woman comment upon their mistakes thus: "What else can you expect? He's a man!" Yes, I affirm that it is a woman's job - for some women, just as it is for some men!

Another question which is frequently hurled at me is this: "Does the woman's point of view have any influence in the Legislature?"

I think that a woman, as a woman, has no particular influence here, any more than has a man - as a man. If she has common sense and good judgment, and speaks only when she has something of constructive value to say, she will receive due consideration. As to woman's point of view, I frankly confess that I have never found out what it is. I find that a certain type of man sees things from much the same point of view as the same type of woman. The socially-minded man and woman will think almost identical thoughts on subjects of social welfare. One might classify humans with various points of view quite accurately, but I fail to see that the sex of the individual would enter largely, if at all, into their classification as humans. Either man or woman may have either a constructive or destructive influence in either public or private life.

This does not say, of course, that because the mind has no particular sex, the same may be said of temperament. I have worked now in association with men in politics for a considerable number of years, and while, at times, I have "raged as furiously as the heathen", (have raged inwardly, knowing that if I raged outwardly, I might be sorry, afterwards) I have at all times found qualities in men which I admire and envy, for women.

Qualities, such as the ability to "scrap" mercilessly, and then shake hands and forget it; and the courage to stand up on their feet and say what they want to say, whether or not they know how to express their ideas in academic English. Self-forgetfulness. I do not say that women are altogether lacking in these qualities, or that all men possess, but that we women should do well to foster them in ourselves.

Women, too, have certain qualities which men may well envy and strive for! An intuitive sympathy which helps them to judge clearly of the motive which has prompted a certain course; a greater sensitiveness to character, making them more frequently keen and accurate judges of men and women. Women are sometimes possessed, too, of a quicker reaction than a man, to unexpected situations; that reaction resulting in a tact and diplomacy which saves them, often, from blunders into which many a man would unwittingly fall.

So much for women - and men - in political life. What of women and men who are, each in his or her own workaday life, building Western Canada, building well, in united effort!

The trail reaches out. The horizon is ever widening. Our pot of gold at the foot of the rainbow has not yet been reached, but we are travelling toward it. I remember the incoherent efforts, the difficult articulation of twenty years or more ago, the vision "seen, as through a glass, darkly", a vision clarified today, showing us as a result of those early strivings, a great co-operative movement, an expression of our Canadian democracy which has brought forth, once again, some of the old pioneer qualities of courage, of self-help, of the spirit of adventure.

One recognizes today a higher faith in the industry of agriculture, a recognition of its basic importance to the nation, as the solid foundation of the structure upon which our national life must be built if we would achieve a mighty nationhood. One sees growing in the farmer's heart, a sense of the high dignity of his calling, and a desire to perfect and protect that dignity.

All these things, and the success of the farmer as a builder of Canada and the Empire, is shaking the drowsy lethargy of the people of the Old World.

There is a "spirit moving among the dead bones". The men of Devon and the men of the North feel the spirit, and hear the voice of their forebears who sailed the Seven Seas, calling to them to follow the old trail West, across the grey waste of waters.

Up the smiling St. Lawrence they sail once more; mighty ships bearing the men and women of the British race to make their home in this, our land, "sandalled with loam; helmed with sun!"

Again, as when I began to write of these memories of mine, my thoughts go back to Canada as I first saw it, thirty-two years ago. The Land of Promise! We have travelled a long way. We have blazed a trail, and we have built a road for those who come after us. The road grows broader, less stony, every day, and each day it leads farther toward the goal of which we dreamed. Some unknown pioneer has expressed the thought which is in my heart today, as I, yet, cry a welcoming hail to the newcomer to Canada:

..."The Road is ours, as never theirs.
Is not one joy on us alone bestowed?
For us, the master-joy, oh Pioneers,
We shall not travel, but we make the Road!"

Appendix C.

Address of Dr. Irene Parlby
given over C.F.R.N., Edmonton
and C.F.C.N., Calgary, "On the
Farm Front" daily broadcast of
the Alberta Federation of Agri-
culture, Edmonton, March, 1952.

I appreciate very much the invitation of the A.F.A. to give a few words of greeting to the farm women of Alberta while in Edmonton. It is a very long time since I have had the opportunity to make contact with you, and many of my old friends among you have left the province, or passed on. It is hard to realize that it is about seventeen years since I retired from all public activities, to the sanctuary of my home and family life. But in those fifteen years, how much has happened!

Our farm women's organization came into being amidst the strains and stresses of the First World War. We had hardly recovered from that when further trouble arose, with the rise of Hitler and Mussolini to power, followed by another global war.

I think we all realize by now that we are passing through one of those volcanic revolutionary eras which have occurred at different periods throughout history, though on a more restricted scale than the present one. We in Canada have been very fortunate, for although we took our part in fighting the evil forces let loose on the world, at least our country was neither devastated nor over-run, as were other countries nearer the firing line. That fact, however, should not encourage us to retire into our individual ivory towers, filled with complacency, and the belief that in any future struggle, we may be equally immune.

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are still abroad, and preparing for a greater catastrophe, unless they can be halted. The Russian volcano is still spewing forth its deadly flow of lava, which has engulfed one free country after another, destroying their liberty, enslaving their people, destroying all our concepts of justice and civilized living. That flow has already reached the Asiatic shores of the Pacific - the waters of that green ocean stand between it and our Western coastline. What of the future?

As individuals, I know how impatient we feel as we ponder these great international crises. But as individuals, we have a definite part to play, by holding on to steadfastness, by helping to form a wise, sane public opinion, through study of what is happening throughout the world, by understanding those forces that are deliberately stirring up confusion, dissention and hatred in every continent, for their own ends. Even the farm organizations on this continent are not immune from their meddling interest!

In a most interesting book I read some time ago, by an intelligence officer, it told of the keen interest Moscow authorities are taking in the various North American farm organizations - apparently as a useful field for their further endeavour.

So we have a definite part to play, also, in guarding our farm organization - not with hysteria, but with alertness, and a keen interest in the type of individuals we help to elect to our Boards and Executives. Our Canadian people at the moment, are passing through a very difficult time, with hundreds of acres of grain still under the snow, and with markets closed to our stock on account of the foot-and-mouth disease. We may need the help of governments in meeting some of these problems. We need, also, the help and understanding of the consuming public. It is important to further our own interests, if for no other reason, that we do not alienate or antagonize either group, by things we say or do, often without thought, in moments of exasperation. We expect courteous consideration from governments, of the problems we lay before them, and if possible, action to solve them. But we are prone to forget, sometimes, that governments also, sometimes, have a right to courteous and reasonable presentation of the facts we wish to bring to their attention, and also, that as representatives of all the people, we have to survey the good of the whole, as well as the interests of any particular group.

Women should remember that they are the guardians of the intangibles of life; they may not be called upon to play any spectacular part, but their quiet influence in maintaining the finer attitudes toward life can, and does, influence human society.

Good-bye for now. I wish you the best of luck for 1952. May the weather-man be kinder to us than he was last year, and may the cattle and hay industry be salvaged from its present plight. I know the splendid courage of the farm people of the West, and I know that courage will never fail you!

--ooOoo--

(Contained in envelope inside back cover).

(Contained in envelope inside back cover).

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APPENDIX D1:

Map of Township 40

APPENDIX D2:

Map of Buffalo Lake District

PHOTOGRAPHS

